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By the Gate of the Sea.

CHAPTER V.



HUSBAND and wife looked at each other for a moment, and then the wife's eyes drooped guiltily. It is characteristic of people at large to be wiser about other people's affairs than they are about their own—being freed, in the one case, of egotism's glasses—and almost anybody can see that although there was sufficient occasion for a domestic scene, there was no reason to regard the position of things as being essentially tragic. You must endure a good deal before you tear yourself from your dearer half

in your sober senses. But the one thing that stared each of these people in the face was a lifelong and inevitable separation.

"I have deceived him," said the wife, with such a cold anguish of repentance as could only come of detection. "He will never believe me nor love me again."

"Is this thing true?" asked Tregarthen coldly. Her aspect was enough to convict her, and he turned away. Icy as he was to look at,

he was afraid of himself, and felt that he was not to be trusted with many words. He would go away therefore, and would think how best to bear himself in this terrible and unsuspected condition of affairs. He had not gone far when it came into his mind that the condition of affairs—however unexpected it might be—was scarcely so terrible as it had seemed at first. He began to think how strongly he had spoken, when—as it now appeared—his wife had wished to take him into her confidence. After all there was no sin or shame in having been an actress. Colonel Pollard had said things of that very Miss Churchill with whom his wife was now identified which were hideous if true or possible, but he knew them to be false. The more he thought about it the more he was persuaded anew of what he had always known as only a lover knows anything—the purity of his wife's mind and history. She had deceived him in one matter, but then he had forced deception upon her. And after all they were man and wife, and he loved her as he had never loved anybody in his life before or could hope to love a second time. The revelation he had surprised was a thing to be made the best of, to be understood and accepted once for all, and then buried and forgotten.

This resolution was not arrived at in a hurry, and it took him an hour or two to put himself into the new mental attitude necessary to its acceptance. When he had succeeded he went home and awaited Mrs. Tregarthen's return, intending a serious conference and a perfect understanding. When he took her back to confidence there should be no lingering doubt in his mind. She should know all that had been charged against Miss Churchill, and she should deny it, and there should be an end of the episode. He was not shaken in his belief in his wife's honour, and if she had not given him all her confidence it was because she had thought it would imperil his love for her.

"Has Mrs. Tregarthen returned?" he asked the servant who admitted him.

"No, sir."

"Let me know when she does so."

"Yes, sir."

He sat a long time silent and alone, and there came into his mind the not too delicate commendations bestowed upon Miss Churchill by the Captain and his echo the Lieutenant. He went with them into the theatre, and the magic of the beautiful voice touched him again. He went anew through his pleasant fancies of her, and his defence of her against Pollard, and his first meeting with her, and his second, and his third—all the story of his courtship floated through his mind—and he would have sworn to her immaculate purity, or would have died to prove his faith in it.

It grew dusk, and the early summer moon was already shining with a ghostly silver gleam in the darkening violet of the sky. Fears began to rise in his mind, and he pictured the delicate sensitive thing in shame and soreness of heart over this pardonable secrecy of hers, hiding herself and fearing to approach him. He remembered how he had asked his ques-

tion, "Is this thing true?" and how without a word from her in answer he had turned away and left her. His fears began to rise higher and to take one or two horrible forms, which presented themselves persistently.

It neither increased nor dissipated these fears when he had run down to the Gate of the Sea and had learnt that she had left the island two or three hours ago, and had returned to the mainland, sending the boatmen back to await his pleasure. He took his seat in the boat at once and bade the men give way. Before they were half across the narrow waters he could see his own house on Gorbay Head, and could make out that the one light which twinkled in it came from his wife's room. His heart seemed almost to fly from his body as he sent before him his message of forgiveness and affection; and when the nose of the boat ground against the shingle he left the little vessel with a leap and ran to the house in haste. A man-servant met him with an uninterested face, and handed him a letter on a salver.

"Mrs. Tregarthen ordered this to be given to you, sir, on your return," he said.

"Where is Mrs. Tregarthen?" asked the husband.

"She went up to town, sir, by the seven express," returned the servant.

"Alone?" inquired his master, turning away to hide his face and trifling with the letter in his hands.

"Took Miss Farmer with her, sir—and the maid."

The servant followed him into the room he entered, and there turned up the lamps and laid hands upon a trifle or two upon the sideboard and the table.

"You may go," said his master quietly.

The man retired, and Tregarthen sat down by the centre table, drew the lamp closer, and opened the envelope. For a time the slender letters danced before his eyes, and he could not make out a word, but in a while he mastered himself and began to read. What he read was incoherent and agonised. It was written in haste, with blots and erasures, and there were blisters upon the paper where the writer's tears had fallen. She had known her own unworthiness in keeping her secret all along, she wrote, but she had never dared to tell him what her past life had been. And now he had discovered her duplicity and wickedness, and she could not bear to face him. She had gone away, and she begged him to forget her. But she loved him, and she prayed heaven to bless him.

There was much more to this effect, and, whilst he read, the shadow of a horrible doubt fell closer and darker round his heart. What was there in the mere discovery, taken by itself, to excite such anguish as the letter displayed? What lay behind the discovery? Was it likely that a wife would run away from her husband and her home on a provocation so trivial as the discovery of itself afforded? Then all his heart rose up to defend her, and he was torn between doubt and trust, and love and fear, and the little mild passions that had dwelt within him dilated to giant

size on a sudden, and took his soul for a battle-ground, and shook it with their conflict.

There was no sleep for him that night, and all next day he wandered vaguely, trying to make up his mind to some course of action. His wife had given him no address, but it did not seem to him at first that it would be difficult to discover her in London. But was her flight in itself a confession of worse than he knew, or could he bear to hear that confession if it had to be made, or to hear her denial of it and to have to doubt her still?

If people always did the plain common-sense thing, always spoke the plain truth, and always looked circumstances in the face, the world would be improved out of knowledge. Mrs. Tregarthen had taken perhaps the most foolish of possible steps, had disguised the truth, and now ran away from the circumstances she had herself created; and yet you shall not despise her if I can help it. It was an innocent courage which had led her—more for her sister's sake than her own—to the stage. It was a pardonable fear which had kept her silent as to that episode in her life. It is one of the ways of women to look their best in the eyes of the people they love, and this leads them to reservations and pretences. A weakness characteristic of a whole half of humanity must not be judged too severely. When she ran away she did so because a tender conscience, hitherto void of great offence, exaggerated her little folly into a crime. She made up her innocent mind that she was one of the wickedest women in the world. She had married her husband under false pretences.

When Tregarthen turned his back upon her she read a final renunciation in the act, and was persuaded that she had lost him for ever. She had no blame for him then or afterwards, and she recognised the justice of the imagined sentence even at the moment when its weight first crushed her. The perfect trust which love should have in love is a flower of slow growth indeed. Often enough life is over before it has reached to its full bloom, though there is this compensation for its laggard coming, that when once it blossoms it can know no decay.

Mrs. Tregarthen went to London, and naturally enough sought the one place there which she had known before—a respectable, if somewhat dingy, boarding-house off the Strand. The stout landlady had not forgotten her, and received her kindly. There was a faint flavour of home in the stuffy bedroom, and at least it was better to be there than to find a nest altogether strange. But the foolish fugitive had run away without any prevision, and had made no arrangements for those bodily needs which continue their claim in spite of sins or repentances. She had twenty pounds in money, and her maid, being bidden to pack for London, had naturally foreseen festivity, and had put up all the hapless lady's jewelry. There was no fear of immediate starvation therefore, but none the less that terror loomed from the future. She was sure that she was for ever parted from her husband, and when the first agony

of that certainty had settled down into a dull pain, she had to think of ways and means for her sister's sake, and in a little while (for a reason she had not hitherto dreamed of) for her own.

The maid, who was for the first time in London, was but poorly impressed with town life, as may be fancied. The stuffy lodging-house was not the sort of place in which Mrs. Tregarthen's position gave her a right to bestow herself, and the maid knew it. Once or twice she had surprised her mistress in tears, and she had found out very early in the history of the expedition that there were no ideas of festivity in Mrs. Tregarthen's mind. She began to put two and two together, and after a week she spoke.

"I beg your pardon, ma'am, but it is my wish to leave."

"How is that, Mary?" inquired the mistress with a sinking heart. The heart had sunk low enough already in all conscience, but it fell lower yet when the maid spoke of leaving. Tregarthen had himself engaged this woman to serve his wife, and the exile was ready to cling to anything that bound her, however slightly, to her home and him.

"Well, ma'am," returned the maid, "since you ask me, I don't understand things, and I'd rather go."

There would be one mouth the less to fill, but that was little. The maid received her wages and went away, though she kept an eye on Mrs. Tregarthen, having fancies of her own concerning the reasons for this curious escapade. The expected gallant never appeared, however, and when Mrs. Tregarthen went abroad, she took the child with her, and, after a purposeless walk, returned without having spoken to a single creature. In these circumstances the maid's interest in her late mistress declined, and she found another place and went her way, content to leave a mystery unsolved.

The poor lady set aside all her gayer dresses and attired herself in sombre raiment as typifying mourning, and when one day Mr. Lorrimer caught sight of her in the street by accident, he took her for a widow.

"Ran away from the stage to be married, did she, poor thing!" said Lorrimer to himself, not unkindly. "Well, if love's young dream is over, she'll be back again. I'm a business man, and I can't afford to miss a chance like Miss Churchill a second time."

So Mr. Lorrimer, without particularly violating his conscience, lit a new cigar, cocked his hat a little, and dogged Mrs. Tregarthen home.

"Boarding-house. Mrs. Barnley. Respectable poverty. Widow left hard up. Encumbered with little girl. Married a widower. Poor thing! poor thing! Get her now on easy terms."

Mr. Lorrimer cocked his hat anew, bit off the end of a second cigar, struck a brown-paper fusee on his trousers, lit the cigar with an air of victory, and walked homewards. Shortly before nine o'clock, being by that time in the full glory of evening-dress, he strolled past the house a dozen times or so, and had begun to examine the windows with some impatience, when a servant girl came up the area steps bearing half-a-

dozen jugs of different sizes, and made her way towards the corner public house. Mr. Lorrimer intercepted her.

"Good evening, my dear. Don't be frightened." The girl had pranced into the middle of the roadway. "I only want to ask you a question—quite a harmless question. Half-a-crown, my dear." The coin rattled into one of the jugs. "There's a lady staying at Mrs. Barnley's—a young lady, dressed in mourning—goes about with a little girl. I want to call upon her—quite honourable and correct—I know of something to her advantage. I used to know her maiden name—Miss Churchill. What is her name now?"

"Mrs. Tregarthen," said the girl. "That's her sister she's got with her."

"Mrs. Tregarthen," said Mr. Lorrimer. "Thank you. I've got the name all right, have I? Tre—gar—then?"

"That's right, sir," responded the servant, polishing her nose with the bottom of a beer-jug. "Tregarthen. Thank you, sir."

"She's at home now, I think?" said Lorrimer.

The maid nodded, and he marched at once to the door of the house and knocked. Mrs. Tregarthen, sitting in her own room, heard the knock and felt her heart so leap at it that she was fain to rise and open her chamber door to listen. But that was a common experience. Not a knock had come to the door of Mrs. Barnley's establishment, since the unhappy lady had entered it, without shaking her heart and fluttering her nerves in this way. She heard the door flung open, and then came the murmur of a male voice, indistinct and low. The maid's voice cackled shrill and clear in answer.

"Mrs. Tregarthen, sir? Yes, sir. Walk in, sir. What name shall I say, sir?"

It had been in Mrs. Tregarthen's mind from the first, or almost from the first, that Arthur might love her so well that, in spite of her wickedness, he would seek her out and forgive her, and this hope had buoyed her up and weighed her down as such things will. Now she believed that he really had traced her, and her knees were so weakened that she could scarce let go the door and creep back to her chair to be in readiness for the servant's coming. Lodging-house maids are not more observant or sympathetic than their neighbours as a rule, but even by the light of the one pale candle on the table Mrs. Tregarthen's face had so much trouble and terror in it that the girl, when she entered with Lorrimer's card, caught fright, and begged to know what was the matter.

"Nothing," said the poor creature, with her eyes wide open, and her face as white as the lace about her throat. "Is that for me?"

She stretched out her hand for the card, and when she had read the name upon it she dropped it with a little moan of escape and disappointment, and one or two half-hysterical tears ran down her cheeks. The servant bustled about the room and got her a glass of water after much unnecessary clatter. Lorrimer, waiting in the room below, had undefined

notions of a cavalry skirmish floating through his mind. A moment later the servant, a petticoated avalanche, precipitated herself downstairs.

"The lady can't see you, sir. She's took quite ill."

"Indeed?" said Lorrimer, politely regretful. "Nothing serious, I trust."

"I ain't so sure o' that," returned the maid. "She's like a ghost, and she can't scarcely sit in her chair, sir."

Lorrimer opened his eyes with unfeigned fear. He saw thousands of pounds in Mrs. Tregarthen, and, being a sanguine man, as theatrical managers nearly always are, he had already arranged terms with the lady and had her enthusiastically trumpeted, and conducted her first performance with prodigious *éclat*. At the very moment when the cavalry skirmish began overhead he had been returning thanks for a piece of plate publicly presented to him (in recognition of his having made a fortune out of her) by the celebrated actress herself. The servant was really frightened, and looked so, and Lorrimer himself caught the infection.

"Back as soon as possible," he murmured. "Gone for a doctor." And he shot from the room to save his thousands and the lady who was to make them.

He had noticed in the course of his peregrinations to and fro before the house that a doctor lived next door, and he rang a startling peal at the medico's bell. The professional gentleman ran wildly into the boarding-house without his hat, and was ushered into the presence of a lady who received him with perfect self-possession and assured him that she had no need for his services. He was not to be got rid of, however, until he had felt her pulse and asked a question or two, and prescribed a tonic.

Before Lorrimer called next day the servant had told Mrs. Tregarthen of the interest he had displayed. The actress remembered the manager kindly, but she had no mind to renew their old acquaintance. She sent word down to him in answer to his inquiries that she was very much better and was very much obliged to him for his kind inquiries. Some people would have accepted this as an intimation of polite dismissal, but Lorrimer was not one of them.

"That's right," he said cheerfully. "I'm glad to hear it. Just say I should like to see her—will you?—if it's quite convenient to her. If it isn't, ask when I can call again."

"Show Mr. Lorrimer into the visitors' room," she said in answer to this message. It might be as well, she thought, to get Mr. Lorrimer over at once. If it were impossible to avoid recognition, it was still possible to let those who recognised her know that she desired privacy, and it was not likely that all who had known her would care to make pursuit of her. She touched her hair and the lace about her throat and wrists with delicate fingers as she stood before her mirror, with no result perceptible to man, and having thus made herself fit to be seen, she descended the stairs and found Lorrimer awaiting her in the visitors' room—a carpeted box with an odour of dry rot.

A stage manager who could feel any sense of *gaucherie* in approaching an actress must have had the practice of his profession wasted upon him. With Lorrimer any sign of dignified reserve, which expressed itself without the pronounced standoffishness of a stage attitude and gesture, was lost. He had played many parts in his time, and to him the saying of the melancholy Jacques was literal—all the world was a stage. He took out the confidential-family-adviser stop, and addressed Mrs. Tregarthen in tones of genial sympathy.

"You left us, madam, in a somewhat sudden and unconventional way, but it was impossible for that or anything else to mitigate the pleasure and advantage of having known you. You have our profoundest sympathy in the calamity which has brought you back to us, but that is tempered by the hope that you may ultimately discover that the profession of which you might have been the brightest ornament has still an attraction for you, and that its triumphs offer a consolation not to be despised."

This was spoken with the air natural to a master of the art of conversation. Lorrimer was one of those people who take their theories so to heart that they make facts of them. His theory was that Mrs. Tregarthen was a widow, and in reduced circumstances. He was quite certain that she left the stage to be married, and was equally sure that she would now return to it.

"Do you mean," she asked, "that I shall go back to the stage, Mr. Lorrimer?" He spread his hands abroad and bowed, with a sweeping gesture of assent. "No, I shall never go back to the stage."

The wrinkles of his smile remained for a second or two, but the light went out of his eyes at once, and the wrinkles faded slowly after it.

"Not go back to the stage, madam?" he cried. "Waste the superb talents God has given you on the mere desert air of private life? Cast away the splendid fortune which only needs an extended hand to grasp it? Impossible, madam—impossible."

Mr. Lorrimer spoke with so evident an amazement that he impressed the listener in spite of herself. She had gone upon the stage simply and purely to make bread for herself and to find an education for her sister. Few of the triumphs or joys of stage life had come home to her, and even when they seemed all to lie waiting for her, she had been able to surrender their promise for the quiet routine of domesticity in Gorbay. They could scarcely have seemed very valuable to her since she had left them so easily. But Lorrimer put the case strongly, if grotesquely, and there could be no doubt of his sincerity.

She was but a simple-minded creature in spite of the talents of which Lorrimer spoke so highly, and she had a way of speaking straight out the thing that was in her mind.

"My husband—" she began, but there she stopped with a sudden sense of heartache at the vast emptiness of the world. There is no pain the human heart can feel which is heavier to bear than that.

"Your husband, madam?" said Lorrimer, prompting her with a tone of respectful sympathy.

"My husband," she began again, "had a profound dislike for the stage, and I must respect his opinion."

"That is natural and commendable, madam," returned Lorrimer with the family-adviser air more strongly marked than ever. "But when—in the course of a week or two—the healing hand of time has softened the sense of loss, you may find yourself less inclined to elevate his scruples into absolute commandments."

She shook her head with an expression so mournful and so resolute that Lorrimer felt it necessary to clear his throat before he spoke again.

"Well, madam, well," he said rather hastily. "If you *should* change your mind, you will know where I am. Fortune lies at your feet. You have only to stoop to pick up wealth and fame. And—as I say—if you *should* change your mind you will find nobody so devoted to your interests as myself. I have made the fortune of a nincompoop before to-day, madam, and genius is the lever Archimedes wanted. With such genius as you possess I could move the world. I ask nothing but my poor share of the glory, and half profits. But I will not further intrude upon you now. Good day, madam, good day."

He was gone, but he left a seed behind him, and though it fell on ground unwilling to receive it, it took root and grew.

To have done a thing, with ninety-nine people in a hundred, is the best of all possible reasons for continuing to do it, especially if the thing is to be done passively. We like or dislike our everyday acquaintances on this principle, and it guides us in more matters than we often care to think of. The runaway wife had never written to her husband to apprise him of her whereabouts, and silence, which at first was hard, had grown into such a habit that by this time nothing could have forced her to break it. She suffered, and she told herself that she deserved to suffer. She trained the thorns of remorse with a hand of constant care, and cultivated unhappiness as only a penitent and a woman could. And all the time she waited in a sort of hopeless hope for her husband to make some effort to recover her. Had he found her he could have taken home, not merely a wife, but a lover so full of love and penitence that she would have been his lifelong slave for no more than the privilege of seeing him. But he also waited with a heart that grew bitterer and heavier day by day, until at last the true masculine impatience of the slow suffering which women bear until they learn to cherish it, bade him throw the burden away. He seemed to cast his heart away with it, but it had to go, and he went back to his mad-brained books again.

That so fine a triviality as that which separated these two hearts and lives should breed a day's coldness might surprise a lover. But there is no measurement for human folly, and the fools, as often as not, are loveable, pitiable, admirable. If only the people who are objectionable all round made fools of themselves, what a charming world we should live in!

CHAPTER VI.

MR. RONALD MARSH gave his poems to the world, and they made almost as much noise as he had hoped. But when one goes forth to make a noise in the world, the character of the clamour which arises is as important as the volume of it, and the public reception of Mr. Marsh's muse, though loud enough to satisfy anybody, aroused the bitterest scorn in the poet's heart. Such a charivari of chaff, such a Jovian roll and peal of laughter arose from the great reviewers, and was taken up by the little ones, as has rarely rung in any poet's tingling ears since reviewing came into fashion. The *Times* set him down to roast at a whole column, the *Tiser* branded him with one red-hot paragraph, and from every point of the compass the critics big and little heaved the coals of fire of friendless criticism at him by the shovelful. But the poet, as Mr. Tennyson had already written, is at the moment of his birth "dowered with the hate of hate—the scorn of scorn," and Mr. Marsh was not easily to be discomfited. He bought sombreros of a wider brim than he had ever worn until then, he vowed in his inmost heart that the shears of the barber should invade his rolling locks no more, and he ordered his tailors to add an inch or two to the poetical cloak in which he commonly went about London. The faithless few who had worn his livery and gone about in his likeness fled from their colours. They had their hair cut in the normal way, and began to attire themselves in the conventional garb of gentlemen. When friends talked about the Leader they made a weak pretence of having been in the secret all along, and tried to make it appear that they had been hugely tickled by the fustian which had thrilled their simple souls. The Leader had lost his following, as most leaders do when they lead to ridicule, but he faced the world alone and meditated fresh poems with an undaunted heart.

He abandoned none of his old haunts, but he found many of his old friends pitiless. There are few men who need sympathy more than the man whose book is a failure. Within it, tangible and visible, lie the nerves of his soul, if he has one; he has put into it his acutest discernment, his sweetest fancies, his loftiest thoughts, his most cunning invention; he has glowed with hope and gone cold with fear about it; he has loved it tenderly and admiringly, as a good wife loves her husband, and with a growth of joy in its strength and beauty, as a father loves his child. Then comes the grim reviewer (born, surely, with bowels of brass and heart of adamant), and slays this darling of the author's heart, scalps it, slits its dear little nose and tender ears, wreaks on it all his barbarous humour of wicked invention, and throws its remains aside without even the poor satisfaction of a christian burial. Who *can* need sympathy more than an author in such a case? But there is no more mercy in the world for him than there is milk in a male tiger.

Yet in the conclave of ten which met in the cramped back parlour in the Strand, the murdered poet found men who had suffered aforetime,

and had known the joy of resurrection. The man in the corner tossed the light quillots of the brain hither and thither, but he aimed them not at the unsuccessful. He had himself tried to stay the tempest, and had written that the book was not so bad after all. Had the poet known him as the dealer of that unkindest cut of all, he would have slain him in his corner before the spectral nine. When he entered and took his seat amongst them, they greeted him more kindly than of old, and made more of a comrade of him. Lorrimer, who was talking, made a point of addressing him personally, so as to make a feature of him.

"Your worship was the last man in our mouths. You remember being here one day, long ago now, when I sang the praises of Miss Churchill?"

"Perfectly," replied the poet. "I went with you to the final dress rehearsal, and you put into my hands the letter she left behind her."

"I was saying so as you came in. That brings the history up to the end of her connection with the stage. Well, everybody knows what a mystery that looked. Not a soul had an idea where she disappeared to."

"I know," said the poet. "I met her afterwards. She married a fellow named Tregarthen—disreputable fellow who was dismissed the army; insisted on using such fearful language at the mess-table that the other men wouldn't stand him. Well-connected fellow—I believe he's the last of one of the oldest families in Cornwall—but an awful black-guard, so I'm told."

"Well, upon my word," said Lorrimer, "that's a pretty sort of cove to forbid his wife with his dying breath to go upon the stage."

Mr. Lorrimer's theory carried him that length.

"Dead?" said the poet. "Is he dead? Well, she's very attractive and quite young. With such a fortune as he could leave her she won't be long without a husband."

"Fortune!" echoed Lorrimer. "She hasn't any fortune. Bless your soul, she's as poor as a church mouse. Living in a boarding-house—and a dam seedy boarding-house it is, I can tell you—just off the Strand."

"I suppose he made ducks and drakes of everything," said the poet. "My father had a place at Gorbay years ago, and they had a good deal of land in those days—the Tregarthens. Poor thing!"

The poet held no malice, except for his reviewers. Outside his verses he was a harmless man, and had not the least desire to hurt anybody. He had long ago been able to forgive Mrs. Tregarthen for snubbing him, and he was sensitive to a tale of beauty in distress—as a poet ought to be.

Lorrimer told his story of the interview between himself and the lost star of the stage, and everybody agreed that the dead Tregarthen of Mr. Lorrimer's imagination was the last sort of person who had a right to have his dying wishes gratified. When the conclave parted and the

poet walked into the Strand, he dived into the street Lorrimer had mentioned and read the doorplates with some little trouble in the gathering dusk until he came upon the boarding-house. He remembered the brilliant and stately creature who had swept so haughtily away from his impertinent presence at Tregarthen, and felt unhappy to think that she was housed in this frowsy caravanserai. He had but seen her twice, and she had certainly ill-treated him, and yet he felt such an interest in her as few women had inspired him with. She was poor and in grief and a widow. Mr. Ronald Marsh left the street slowly and sadly, and thought how full of trouble was the world, and mused on Death and the Reviewers, and such grisly themes.

It was no business of any man's, but two or three people who knew him caught the poet at odd times in the act of leaving that street after dark, with a certain marked air of furtive adventure. If any hope of seeing Mrs. Tregarthen again drew him that way, or if he merely went to moon in the neighbourhood because it induced that curious sense of the abolition of moral responsibilities with regard to language which is so valuable to poets, would seem to be uncertain. When you relax your brains for the manufacture of verses, and allow them to flow out where they will, diffuse and devious, a remembrance of some person of the opposite sex serves as a sort of centre for the tides, dissipating or rallying them quite apart from the will of the patient.

It had grown into winter time, and the rainy night had fallen upon London, and the streets had a fungous odour in the rain, and were inch-deep in mud, when the poet, bearing his demon with him, slashed past the lodging-house—top-booted, with his sombrero picturesquely flapping and his long cloak picturesquely flying in the wet wind which blew up from the river. He was scathing a reviewer, and would have thrown his annual income into Thames to have secured a stately rhyme to "viper;" but just as he passed the boarding-house door it opened, and the merest glance assured him that Mrs. Tregarthen stood there attired for the street. A second or two later the wind caught the door, and it slammed noisily. The poet moderated his headlong pace, paused and turned. Mrs. Tregarthen's tall and graceful figure went fluttering Strandwards.

Ronald Marsh knew perfectly well that it is not counted a gentlemanly thing to follow a lady without her knowledge and consent, and he piqued himself on being a gentleman almost more than on being a poet. He did not think it honourable to dog a lady's footsteps, and it was no affair of his to know whither she was bound on foot on a night so inclement. Whilst he thought thus he followed Mrs. Tregarthen, regulating his own pace to hers. This was shameful, and he turned away, but only for a second. When he looked again the fluttering figure was gone, though there was no opening on the street to right or left, and he had seen her outlined like a wavering silhouette against the Strand lights a mere fraction of time ago. A special puddle lay abreast of where

he had last seen her, noticeable because it caught the lights of the bright street beyond and reflected them like a mirror laid aslant. He kept his eyes upon this landmark, and, though as he grew closer the light faded from it, he knew that he had not lost his place. He was sure—with a keener pang than anything but the reviews had hitherto caused him—that he had not lost the place; for where the wind-beaten figure had disappeared stood a swinging door, and above it the triune globes of gold. Poverty's storm drum is mast-high all the year round.

The young man drew into the shadow of a corner, and watched the door, with no memory of his scruples of half a minute back. It was not the business of the moment to analyse the motives which moved him, but they were nine-tenths made up of pity and a helpless wish to be of service. He had to wait in the wind and rain for full five minutes before the swinging door opened, and Mrs. Tregarthen reappeared, heavily veiled, and ran against the beating wind to the door of the boarding-house, where she paused to use a latch-key, and then disappeared swiftly.

At the thought of youth, and grace, and genius brought to such a pass as this, the poet was grieved, and he walked miserably away, not seeing how to be of use, but burdened with a heavy sense of the necessity for doing something. A man may be brimful of conceit and may write bad verses, and yet have a good heart. He walked home and dressed for dinner, and dined moodily with people who laughed at him for being moody. Then he went, at a late hour, to the theatre, and there encountered Lorrimer. He had something of a struggle with himself before he could take the manager into confidence; but at length he did it, swearing him to secrecy. Lorrimer heard him through with an expression of face bordering on the distracted.

"If I don't find out something about this by and by," said the manager, "I shall go mad. Come here, into the box-office. Look at this advertisement in the *Times*. Where are we? Oh, here it is. Read that."

The poet read—

"Miss Churchill is requested to claim her private fortune at the hands of Messrs. Lowe & Carter, of Clement's Inn.—A. T."

"Now," said Lorrimer, when Ronald Marsh looked wonderingly up at him, "what the Moses is it all about? These people, Lowe and Carter, were the lawyers who paid me my claim against Miss Churchill. She had money then, or the means of getting money, or she couldn't have left the stage and have paid my claim. Now, here she is in financial difficulties, running to the pawnbroker's—and I'll swear she's a lady, born and bred—and all the while she's asked in the newspapers to go and claim her private fortune! Because you know it's as plain as the nose on your face that it's the same woman."

"Who said Tregarthen was dead?" said the poet. "These are his initials."

"I said he was dead," returned Lorrimer. "She told me so." He was quite persuaded that she had done so. "It must be the same woman. Anyway, I'll tell you what I can do. I can go and see the lawyers and tell 'em her address. We have done business together already. Since I saw this advertisement I've had the curiosity to turn over the file of the *Times*, and I find that it's been published every day for nearly four months. I wish I could persuade her to come back to the boards. Unless her private fortune is a precious big one, I'd guarantee to double it for her. She's a perfect gold mine. There never was such a Rosalind, and I don't believe there ever will be such another."

The sense of romance and mystery which seemed to grow up about Mrs. Tregarthen helped to keep her in Ronald Marsh's mind, and he began to haunt the street she lived in, and, during hours of darkness, to prowls about its neighbourhood, until the police set watchful eyes upon him and booked him in their own minds as a person with an unlawful purpose.

Lorrimer wrote to the lawyers, asking if the Miss Churchill advertised was identical with the Miss Churchill in whose behalf they had done business aforetime. Receiving an answer in the affirmative, he supplied them with her address, and waited to hear more. No news reached him until the poet turned up one evening, with greatly disturbed aspect, and announced that Mrs. Tregarthen and the little girl who lived with her had left the boarding-house and had taken new lodgings in a street off the Tottenham Court Road—that both she and the child were poorly and scantily dressed, and that the house in which she now lived was fit only for the occupation of the very poor. Lorrimer went to the lawyers, begging to be enlightened. They, inquiring courteously into his right to claim enlightenment and finding it to be non-existent, respectfully declined to satisfy him. He retreated, and had new conferences with the poet, who was melodramatically gloomy, and let fall deadly hints about villany, and betrayal, and the wild justice of revenge, perplexing Lorrimer still more. At last, spurred by his lofty hopes of the actress's possible future and his own, and moved at least in part by the promptings of good nature, and haled towards a solution of the mystery by a very cable of curiosity, he leaped impatiently into a hackney carriage, and set out in search of Mrs. Tregarthen. He had her address from the poet.

Sun-blistered paint, years old, upon the door; thick veils of dust upon the windows; a mere well of an area, with rusted railings round it: doorsteps cracked and sunken at the centre.

"She might have had a house in Park Lane by this time," thought Lorrimer, as he scanned the place, "and yet she lives here. What was her private fortune, I wonder? The last curse of a dying mother-in-law? It looks like it."

When he tugged at the bell-pull, a long piece of rusted iron came out from the door-post with a reluctant creak. He pushed it back again,

and tapped the blistered door with his gloved knuckles. A slatternly woman came into the well of an area, wiping her hands upon a dirty apron, and, having inspected him, went leisurely into the house again, and after a pause which seemed long to his impatience, opened the front door an inch or two, and regarded him afresh in unpromising silence.

"Good morning," said Lorrimer, with smooth politeness. "You have a lady staying here, ma'am, I believe, and I should be extremely obliged if I might be allowed to see her. We are old friends, and I have been informed that she is in some distress." Lorrimer was gorgeous as to his attire, and his manner was almost monarchical. As he spoke he drew a half-crown from his waistcoat pocket, and holding it delicately between his finger and thumb, like a duke performing a playful conjuring trick, dropped it into the woman's palm, which came automatically to receive it. The woman opened the door a little wider.

"Do you mean Mrs. Tregarthen, sir?" she asked.

"That," said Mr. Lorrimer, "is the lady's name."

The woman opened the door still wider, and permitted him to enter. A ragged oilcloth clung somehow to the floor, but the unwashed stairs were carpetless.

"What name shall I say, sir?" asked the landlady.

"Say Mr. Lorrimer," returned the manager; but he followed closely on her heels as she mounted the stairs, and was resolved to present himself before he could be refused an audience. He could not have told then or afterwards whether pity, curiosity, or managerial enterprise drew him on more strongly. Either the first or last would have been in itself enough, and the three together were irresistible.

The woman paused on a dark landing, and knocked at a door invisible to Lorrimer.

"Come in," said a voice in reply; and the knocker entered.

"A gentleman to see you, ma'am," she said, in a voice for which Lorrimer could have thrown her down the stairs. He knew one side of the world and of human nature pretty well, and he read the hypocrisy and propitiation of the carneying tone. He could have sworn that the woman habitually bullied her lodger.

"Tell him," said Mrs. Tregarthen in a frightened voice, "that I cannot see him. I——"

Lorrimer was in the room already, and had taken in half its sordid details at a glance. A bed in a corner, with a little bundle lying on it; a chair; a table; a few dresses hanging on a wall from which the paper dripped in moist festoons; a rusty grate, empty.

"Madam," said the manager advancing, "you must not decline to see me. I come as a friend."

Pity had the better of managerial enterprise for a moment at least, and the room went dim to Lorrimer's eyes. Mrs. Tregarthen, in a shabby black dress which made her pale face look paler than it was, stood (in the attitude in which she had arisen from her seat on the side of the bed)

with both hands on the table, her whole figure shrinking like that of any weak wild creature when suddenly alarmed.

"Oblige me by leaving us, if you please," said Lorrimer to the landlady. The woman reluctantly withdrew, and Lorrimer held the door open to watch her down the stairs. He could not help being stagey, for use is second nature, but he was thoroughly in earnest when he turned: "My poor dear creature—don't mind me talking to you in this way—I'm old enough to be your father—my poor dear creature, what on earth do you mean by living in a place like this?" She had only moved to breathe since his first entrance to the room, and her eyes said, "Leave me for pity's sake!" if eyes ever said anything. But, as he paused, the bundle on the bed began to move, and a feeble cry came from it. She darted to it, peeled from it, swiftly and delicately, the shawl which enfolded it, and took it to her arms. A baby. "Oh, Lord!" groaned the manager, with the tears in his eyes again, "how can you have the heart to throw away such prospects as you have, when you've got such claims upon you?"

She looked at him almost wildly, and walked up and down the room rocking the crying child in her arms. He thought the look defiant, and broke out anew.

"Any grown-up creature has a right to starve and be wretched, but, by God! ma'am, nobody has a right to ill-treat a baby. It's criminal, Mrs. Tregarthen; it's nothing less than monstrous. How dare you throw away that child's chances in the world?" Lorrimer trod the boards with the air of amazed virtue.

"How dare you speak so to me?" she demanded, pausing suddenly in her agitated walk about the room. "What right have you here?"

"For God's sake, don't be angry with me!" said Lorrimer, descending from his place of moral pride. "I'm the best friend you have in the world; I am indeed." He was no longer the representative of virtue amazed, but had become the attached old family servitor, and pleaded with the last wilful descendant of the race he loved.

At this moment there came a rap at the door, and the landlady appeared, bearing a bulky parcel and a letter.

"This is underpaid, ma'am," said the landlady, laying the parcel on the table, "and the postman says there's tenpence on it."

Lorrimer drew a shilling from his waistcoat pocket.

"There, there, my good woman; don't interrupt us again, if you please." He walked to the window and looked out upon the street. "Pray look at your letters, Mrs. Tregarthen, and excuse me for being here at all."

He saw that she had glanced anxiously at the parcel, which looked as if it enclosed a box of some sort. She obeyed him without a word, and he heard every movement she made as she uncorded the packet. Then he heard the tearing of the envelope about the letter, and the rustle of the paper, as it shook in her hand. There was nothing to look

at in the street except a mangy cat who stalked a town sparrow, and missed the bird by a hair's breadth when she made her final spring. It began to strike Lorrimer that Mrs. Tregarthen was a long while silent, and when, at last, he turned round, he raised a yell of dismay, for the poor lady had fallen back upon the bed, and lay there in a dead faint, with the baby still in her lap. She looked so thin and pale and quiet as she lay there, that the manager, who was a bachelor, and knew nothing of women and their weaknesses, took her for dead, and rushed to the door with a tremulous call for the landlady. That good creature despatched him for brandy, and, he being gone, she proceeded very calmly to examine the contents of the packet and the letter. The packet contained a prodigious quantity of manuscript and nothing else. From the letter the landlady gathered (she could just read) that Messrs. Bilge and Barker regretted that they could not see their way to the publication of ———. A step on the stair warned her of the visitor's return.

"Look up, there's a dear creatur'," said the landlady in audible solicitude. "Ah, that's it, my pore darlin'. You'll be nicely by and by."

Lorrimer sweated with anxiety whilst the landlady poured a few drops of brandy through the patient's lips, but in a few minutes Mrs. Tregarthen began to move and moan, and to click her teeth together, and then he was ordered from the room, and paced to and fro upon the fragmentary oilcloth in the hall for the space of half an hour.

"How is she?" he asked, in a whisper, when the woman at last came down stairs.

"She's had a good cry, pore dear," said the landlady, breathing neat brandy at him; "and now I've persuaded her to lie down. She'd better not be disturbed again for a hour or two."

"Of course not. Of course not," said Lorrimer, fidgetting with his watch-chain. "She has been very hard up, I'm afraid?"

"Owes me three pound thirteen shillin' and sixpence for rent," returned the landlady, "and being but a pore woman myself, though with a feeling heart, I could not deny her nothing, and candles of a night extravagant."

Lorrimer was unhung by the events of the morning, and for the moment he was half inclined to satisfy the landlady's claim upon the spot; but, not having taken a final leave of his business senses, he decided against that course.

"Whatever the lady owes," he said, "shall be paid." He drew his purse from his pocket, and the landlady's eyes glistened. "Get her," he said, slowly and thoughtfully, with a half-sovereign between his thumb and finger, "get her something nice and tempting and nourishing against the time she wakes. No. Never mind. I won't trouble you. I'll get it myself, and bring it round in two hours' time."

He was gone, and the landlady was staring after him with the look the lean cat had cast after the plump escaping sparrow a while before.

Lorrimer was driven to Oxford Street, and on the way he used much terrible language without particular application. He had pity enough to fill him to the brim, and curious bewilderment enough, and (when it could beat out the others) managerial enterprise inflated him. For each of these profane language seemed to furnish the only escape-pipe, and the manager's speech would have been appropriate to a deep-dyed villain bent on murder. He halted the carriage at a shop door, alighted, entered, and bought jellies and preserves, drove further and bought wine, drove further and bought fruit, a goodly pile, and a double handful of sweet-smelling country blossoms.

"Damme!" said Lorrimer, as he sat in the hackney carriage and surveyed these purchases. "I'll win the jade's heart. I'll *make* her act. I'll make her so grateful that she can't refuse me."

A brilliant idea struck him, and he arrested the coach once more. He entered a shop, and when, after the lapse of some two or three minutes, he came once more upon the street, he wore the smile of a man who has just said checkmate to opposition. He unfolded the tissue paper which wrapped his latest purchase.

"That ought to touch a mother's heart," he said, surveying it admiringly. "Real coral. Real silver bells, and the finest india-rubber to be had for love or money."

He took all his purchases to the shabby house in the street off the Tottenham Court Road, and he waited with such patience as he could command until Mrs. Tregarthen was reported to be awake, and he could be again admitted to her room.

"A little trifle of jelly," said Lorrimer, balancing the preparation. "Calves-foot jelly, my dear madam—a most nourishing article. Pray try a little. A glass of port. I am never to be taken at a disadvantage. I carry a pocket corkscrew. Try that, madam. I guarantee it excellent. A little trifle for the baby, Mrs. Tregarthen. I am a bachelor myself, but I am told that children value such gauds."

The baby stretched out her hand for the bauble, and Lorrimer surrendered it. The sense of his own goodness of heart was too much for him, and his eyes became so moist that he had to retire to the window, where he blew his nose and waved his pocket handkerchief with an air of great nonchalance. But Mrs. Tregarthen knew why he had retired, and she herself began to cry out of weakness and despair and gratitude, and Lorrimer blew his nose with violence, as if he were aggravated with it, and had a spite to wreak upon it. His emotion and his friendliness won upon the lonely woman's heart, and by and by he began to pour out golden promises upon her. She was silent for a long time, but at last he grew so warm that he asked her the one question in his mind.

"How do you hope to live at all unless you take the chances you have?"

"I thought," she said, "that I could make a living by writing."

The gesture she used sent his glance to the table. He approached

and picked up the letter which lay there, and then turned over a folio or two of the great pile of manuscript.

"Ah!" he said. "And you find you can't? Well, my dear madam, here lies El Dorado before you. You have only to say Yes to my proposal, and you can leave this wretched hole at once, and go to the best hotel in London. You can dress like a princess, and you can command comfort and refinement for your child. Oh, madam, madam," cried the manager, with tears in his voice, "for your child's sake do not let me plead with you in vain."

If Lorrimer were half a humbug, she at least was all in earnest in her thoughts.

"Yes," she answered; "I will do what you wish. I will go back to the stage again. For the child's sake."

Next day saw her once more attired like a lady, and located in sumptuous private apartments. Lorrimer was here, there, and everywhere, spreading the glorious news.

CHAPTER VII.

WHILST Mrs. Tregarthen was afflicting herself with unnecessary miseries her husband was suffering from griefs less easily to be avoided. The copy-books say that Innocence is Bold, and it is one of the conventional arguments against a Suspect that he runs away. As a matter of course the running away is merely an indication of character, and has nothing to do with guilt or innocence. The shrug of surprised pity at the benighted accuser, the placid mien of assured innocence, the martyr's resignation and the saint's forgiveness, are things familiar in our courts of justice, and are displayed there, never by the innocent, but daily by the branded rascals who use them as a part of stock in trade. But it takes much experience to kill a phrase, and Innocence is still Bold in the copy-books and the apprehension of the unworldly.

Mrs. Tregarthen's flight, her foolish innocent letter, and her continued silence were enough to prejudice the most trusting of men against her. The real motive for flight was absurdly inadequate to anybody who could survey the case dispassionately. To Tregarthen its inadequacy seemed exaggerated, because he, better than any outsider could have known it, knew his own readiness to forget and forgive the small deceit of which his wife had been guilty—if that were all. The agonised letter, with its talk about "guilty deceit" and "unknown past," seemed to point to more than the wickedness of a month or two upon the stage; and when week after week dragged by, and brought no news from the runaway, Tregarthen's first suspicions and fears were bit by bit confirmed, until they settled into dreadful certainty.

He dismissed and paid the architect and the builder, and brought the works at Tregarthen to a close. Blocks of stone, rough or trimmed,

balks of timber, mounds of mortar, and tracts of trodden lime defaced the grass before the old mansion, and were left there unheeded, a visible sign of hopes abandoned. A new unfinished wall or two mocked the ruins, and the whole place was desolate with the signs of raw repair. Tregarthen left the house in which he had resided during his brief married life, and went back to the home of his fathers.

As may be guessed, the whole countryside was alive with speculation. Where everybody was equally ignorant, it was natural that there should be many who were the sole repositories of truth; and it was equally natural that all the versions set about by these enlightened people should differ. But howsoever they differed in detail, it was remarkable to notice how they agreed in the main point. The old story against Tregarthen revived and took additions to itself, and it was settled by common consent that he had done something dreadful, and that Mrs. Tregarthen had been compelled to desert him. Some of the hungrier after melodrama found shivery hints of murder in the story, and dropped dark sayings about convenient caves on Tregarthen Island.

In Tregarthen's mind his wife's flight was a thing of long ago before a somewhat obvious reflection occurred to him. She had given him her fortune to pay for the repairs of the old house, and he had no right to retain it. From the moment when he thought of this the money seemed to burn him, and he went off in hot haste to London. Messrs. Lowe and Carter, of Clement's Inn, had been his wife's solicitors, and he naturally applied to them. The senior partner was a man of genial aspect, not at all legal in his looks; an elderly man, with a boyish frankness of manner and a smiling eye.

Tregarthen told his story with a savage brevity.

"My wife for reasons of her own has left me. You know that she made over to me the whole of her own fortune."

"In spite of my advice," said the lawyer.

"Precisely. I am here to return it. If you have no present knowledge of her whereabouts——"

"None in the world."

"You may advertise, requesting her to apply to you, and saying that her fortune lies in your hands. If you will execute the necessary instruments, I will sign them before leaving town."

"You wish the transfer to be absolute and unconditional?"

"Absolute and unconditional. Be good enough not to mention my name in the advertisement. She will respond to the name of Miss Churchill."

"Her stage name," said the lawyer, "before she married."

"You knew that?" said Tregarthen, looking darkly at him.

"We knew that. Certainly. We arranged her father's affairs, and were in occasional communication with her until a few months ago. Excuse me, Mr. Tregarthen. Men in my profession sometimes hear a

good deal of domestic discomforts, and sometimes succeed in patching up a difficulty."

"I shall not ask your mediation in this case, sir," Tregarthen answered. "I shall be obliged if you will delay me as little as possible. I have no other business in London."

He did not leave a pleasant impression on the lawyer's mind; and if he had known it, or had cared to know it, he had a disagreeable impression to clear away to begin with. The lawyer had heard Tregarthen's unfortunate regimental story from the one quarter in which it was likely to be reviewed with the least mercy. Colonel Pollard was a client of Messrs. Lowe and Carter's, and when the Colonel told a story he had a knack of telling it to his own credit. In his narrative Tregarthen shone as a rowdy and a traducer of the sex, a roué, a boaster, and a black-guard.

The necessary documents were drawn up and signed, the advertisement was prepared and inserted, and Tregarthen went back to his island. Before he left town he was asked one question by the lawyer.

"Do you desire to entrust me with any message to Mrs. Tregarthen in case the advertisement should reach her, and she should apply to us?"

"None," said Tregarthen. His heart was sore, and he was weary of the world. There was no man in England more unhappy, and the very necessity of the case forbade him to repose confidence in any man.

He went back and lived almost alone, and loathed the world. There was no honour in man and no truth in woman, and he had learned this bitter creed by experience. To uplift a voice for Honour was to call down ruin; to love was to be betrayed; to be blameless meant that the human rarity who dared it should be shunned and hated.

For a long time his books were charmless, and day by day his heart's auditor added Despair to Hatred, and found the sum total to be Misery. After a pause he learned that the lawyers had by chance discovered Mrs. Tregarthen, and that she had refused to touch a penny of the money from his hands. This might have puzzled him if he had been in the humour to be puzzled by anything. As it was, he wrote icily back that the money was none of his, but hers, and that she might please herself about accepting or refusing it. He at least had no claim upon it. The men of law wrote once more, saying that Mrs. Tregarthen had again disappeared, and asking for instructions. He had none to give, and Miss Farmer's fortune lay at interest therefore and remained unclaimed.

The blustering spring was back again, and March was wilder than it had been for many a year. For three days one tremendous gale blew from the west, and, gathering strength in the great ocean spaces, poured such a tide upon the coast as had scarcely been matched within the memory of living men. Storms of sleet and rain swept over the island, and communication with the mainland was impossible. It pleased Tregarthen to be thus shut out from the world, and the savage isolation

the tempest brought him was in rare consonance with his mood. The milder aspects of nature had ceased to attract him, but this mad mingling of the elements drew him continuously abroad, and he spent hours upon the western rocks when he could hardly stand against the wind, and could not look to windward for an instant.

On the last night of this prolonged tempest the Atlantic rollers fell with such force and volume that they cast stones as large as a man's head forty or fifty yards inland. The east was as black as ink already, and the west was a gruesome grey, when Tregarthen (clinging with both hands to the wet surface of a boulder which lay three hundred paces from the tidal line, and taking his last look at the sea-race as it went foaming back from the crags upon his right) saw a sudden tongue of light flash out from the darkness, and heard, or thought he heard, a second or two later, the heavy boom of a gun. Crouching behind the boulder, and so sheltering his eyes from the wind, he could dimly make out the form of a great vessel, and just as he was sure of her he saw a second tongue of light flame out from her, but this time, though he listened with all his soul, the gun was dumb in the prodigious noises of the sea. Next, he lost her for a minute in the gloom, and found her again by a third tongue of flame. Every second of that dreadful minute had brought the fancied sound of the gun's voice to his ears.

Each flash was nearer than the last, and he could see that the ship was sweeping helplessly on shore. He made his difficult and dangerous way towards her, sometimes sheltered by the broken ground, but oftener so beaten by the wind that he could but crawl upon his hands and knees. All the time, at intervals which seemed incredibly apart from each other, the noiseless lightning shot from the vessel's side. Whenever the inequalities of the ground hid her from him he fancied he could hear the gun boom and boom and boom, but whenever he saw the flash the gun was dumb. He came breathless and panting upon the northern rocks and could make out the lines of the hapless ship more clearly. There was no shelter for her on the leese of the island, for, as Tregarthen knew, the sea was running there like a mill race magnified a myriad times. She drifted with huge lurches towards this channel, and Tregarthen raging with pity and helplessness tore along the rocks. If he could he would have cast himself upon the ground and have seen no more until all was over, but the fascination of horror was upon him, and he was as powerless to resist it as he was to save a life aboard the vessel. She was in sight now continually, and he ran down the broad grass platform with the wind at his back, and kept alongside at a distance of little more than three hundred yards. What with the dashing spray and the wind and the gloom, he could not make out a soul on board, but the flash spoke twice more to his helpless heart, and then the great craft seemed resigned to die in darkness, and even to leap at her doom, as despairing men have been known to do.

The score of men, women, and children who, apart from Tregarthen's

household, made up the sole population of the island, were clustered on the northern rock above the Sea Gate. Tregarthen's housekeeper, maid, and man-servant were there also, and when he came amongst them they were all staring at the fated ship. Against the opposite rocks she scarcely showed at all, and she was as often fancied as seen; but now, in a strange way, the gloom began to lighten, as gauze after gauze of cloud was torn from the higher skies, and the moon showed through, at first in a mere broadly-dispersed but feeble gleam, but finally shining through a clear rift with a star or two about her.

"There's where she'll break!" said one old sea-dog, pointing to the southern wall of the Sea Gate. He roared the words, but only one man heard him in the howling of the wind and sea.

"You'm right," said the neighbour to whom he spoke. "The race sets terrible off Gorbay Head."

"See her acomin' now," cried a third, seizing Tregarthen by the arm.

The whole force of the main tide set westward. To the north-west of the island juts out a promontory four miles long and as many broad, and when a west wind blows upon this coast the chief force of the current makes for the narrow passage between Gorbay Head and Tregarthen. Gorbay forms an irregular semicircle almost due east of the island, and the tide, sweeping past the southern end of Tregarthen, raves round this arc until the narrower current meets it, when it turns and the two break together upon the southern Sea Gate wall. The engines were never built which could fight a ship's way against that awful race when the Atlantic swells it with a storm from the west, though at other times Gorbay is a sheltered harbour.

Between the Head and the island the opposing currents caught the ship, and spun her twice or thrice in a wild circle, and then she came bowling down, swift and steady, as if there were a breeze abeam and every stitch of canvas had been set.

Everybody with one consent ran for the mouth of the Sea Gate, though they turned their backs upon the ship to do it, and, after a hurried clamber down the wet rocks, they stood upon the sand and watched the channel, and waited for the end. In spite of her broken masts, and the tangle of spars and cordage which encumbered her deck, she looked stately as she swept into sight and made for death almost at the watchers' feet. No ear on shore heard her when she struck. She touched the rock, and it seemed to have power to melt her. She fell back from the climbing seas and flying foam, and her ponderous bows had vanished. She drove forward again, and retired again, and again drove forward, and fell to pieces softly, melted away, dissolved, as if no force were used at all. The shriek and groan of severing timbers were no more heard than the cry of severing soul and body.

Those on shore who had the heart to look saw two or three wretches leap from the deck into the boiling waters, and two or three others

clinging here and there, until the ship had broken on the rock like a cloud upon a cloud.

As the vessel first touched the rock the moon was shrouded, and as she melted away the light grew again. Whilst the watchers stood with aching hearts, a sudden volume of water poured into the narrow gate and drove them back. When it fell again, reluctantly, as if its liquid fingers clutched at the sand, it left a fragment of a spar behind it, and almost before the quickest eye had seen this, another wave fell and hid it. When that wave retired it dragged the spar with it, and rolled it over and over. Tregarthen shrieked like a woman; for there, plain to sight, was a child strapped to the rolling spar. None heard the cry, but all saw the forward dash he made, and all realised the double hope and fear. He had reached the spar, and had wound the fingers of his right hand among the coils of rope which bound the child, when the next wave swept up, and tossed him high, as if he had been a straw. But he held on, and, when the wave cast him to the beach, he dug his left fingers in the sand and tried for a grip with his toes. Hercules would have had no more chance against that raging backwash than a baby, and Tregarthen went dragging down the sandy slope until the advancing wave swept up again, lifted him, rolled him over, and cast him and the spar down together. The spar fell uppermost, and struck Tregarthen so heavily on the head that, with a great crackle and sparkle of lights before his eyes, he swooned and lay like a stone.

The spar came end-on this time, and one Cornish sea-dog fell on it and gripped it with his might, and a second, falling on his knees behind the first, took him round the loins with knitted fingers, and a third seized the second by the leather belt he wore. The next wave came howling up; but before it had them fairly in its grasp, a fourth had seized the third by the hand, and a fifth the fourth, and when the great monster went grinding back with its reluctant fingers clutching at the sand, the line was sound. Before the sea came again, Tregarthen and the child were out of its reach; for the rope had miraculously tangled itself about the rescuer's arm, and when the men dragged at the spar he came with it.

There was no memory of the storm in the mild spring air when Tregarthen next awoke to a knowledge of the world. He was lying in bed in his own room, and the window, which faced to the south, was open, so that he could just hear the gentle chiding of the sea. He lay for a time without a care to remember anything; but when he tried to move he found head, hands, and limbs marvellously heavy, and he began to be aware that he ached all over. Then he remembered the storm, the shipwreck, and the rescue he had attempted.

"Is anybody here?" he asked, in a voice so feeble that he was surprised at it.

His housekeeper's voice responded with an ejaculation of pious joy, and the old woman was at the bedside in a moment.

"You know me, sir?" she said.

"Yes," he answered. "I have been ill? Who saved me? Did they save the child?"

"It was Reuben Pollarth," said the housekeeper, "went in after you first, sir. But they all helped."

"Did they save the child?" he asked again.

"The child's quite safe, sir. Don't you talk no more now, Mr. Arthur, there's a dear."

"Where is the child? In the house?"

"Yes, sir, yes," returned the old lady. "But don't you talk, dear heart, or you'll do yourself a mischief."

"It was a boy, I think," said Tregarthen.

"Yes, yes, sir, yes," said the housekeeper. "Here's your sleepin' draught, Mr. Arthur."

"Bring him here," said Tregarthen. "No, no!" moving his eyebrows impatiently at the draught. "The boy. Let me see him. Bring him here at once."

The old lady rustled softly from the room, afraid to deny him longer.

"The Tregarthens 'll have their way if they are dying," she said to herself. "It was their manner always." She returned in a moment. "I have sent for him, sir."

Tregarthen made a response with his eyes, and lay still. By and by there was a knock at the door, and the housekeeper, answering it, led into the room a little fellow of six or seven years of age, and set him where her master could see him. The child was pale, and his cheeks were hollow. He had a profusion of light hair, a shy but pleasant aspect, and large grey eyes.

"Let him be taken care of," said Tregarthen, in his feeble voice. "Bring him to me again to-morrow. A pretty child. Any one else?"

"No, sir," said the housekeeper, with a downward glance at the child.

"Bring him again to-morrow," said Tregarthen. "I am tired."

Early Spring in California.

APRIL in California ! What a dream of delight the words recall to the fortunate traveller whose times and seasons have been so happily ordered as to bring him to the Granite State at this favoured season ; for all these Western States are like different worlds, according as we see them in the green loveliness of their fresh spring-time, or when the long summer's drought has transformed the flowery pastures into broad plains of yellow sun-dried hay and withered plants, all smothered in stifling dust.

Even when, forsaking the plains, the traveller turns his steps to the great mountain ranges, he only who arrives in the early spring-time can revel in their full beauty. For him, the hills are rainbow-hued with countless blossoms, and every streamlet, fed by the melting snows on the upper ranges, becomes a rushing river, and every waterfall is a vision of entrancing loveliness.

The summer wanderer travels in choking, blinding dust clouds. He finds the streams insignificant, the azaleas already on the wane, and even the largest waterfalls mere ghosts of their spring glory, while all the gleaming temporary falls, born only of the snows, have altogether disappeared.

I had, therefore, good cause to deem myself fortunate, when, owing to prolonged detention in the beautiful isles of the South Pacific, I landed in San Francisco on Easter morning, and received my first impressions of the New World from its exquisitely decorated churches, with their lavish display of flowers. Each church in the great city strove to outdo its neighbour in its profusion of roses and pure white lilies—chiefly the Calla lily, which we call Arum.

Throughout California the afternoon of Easter Day is the children's floral festival, and thousands of happy little ones march in procession, with gay banners and offerings of flowers, to take part in a joyous choral festival, and to present their gift of lovely fragrant flowers—perhaps also of money—for the poor and suffering.

After this glimpse of what Californian gardens can produce, we made various expeditions in the neighbourhood, and everywhere the prominent object was the wealth of wild flowers. We drove for miles through lupine scrub—hardy, perennial lupines, indigenous to California, and able to flourish on the driest sand. So their growth has been greatly encouraged on the desolate sand dunes on which the great city has sprung up ; and these pioneer lupines are doing a mighty work in

reclaiming thousands of acres of the arid, shifting sands. Each bush bears countless spikes of blossom, pink, lilac, white, blue, pale lemon, or orange colour; and besides these shrub lupines, all other varieties grow abundantly—small lemon-coloured flowers, large succulent blue lupines, and all manner of dwarfs.

Elsewhere we passed by patches of intensely blue larkspur, and a scarlet flower called painted brush, and many another beautiful wild flower. But, above all, our eyes rested in wonder on broad sheets of the most vivid orange, scattered here and there over the green pasture hills. We were told it was the California poppy, and, on nearer inspection, recognised the familiar *eschscholtzia* of our own gardens, which here, in its native land, attains a luxuriance unrivalled in exile.

But not till we reached the flower-strewn slopes of the Coast Range could we fairly lay claim to having some idea of the glories of this great floral region. Here hills and meadows were all alike ablaze with bright-hued blossoms, scarlet and gold, pink, white, and lemon colour, blue and purple, of every shade. Flames of vivid colour lighted up the forest glades, and brightened the darkest ravines or the greenest grass slopes; scarlet and blue larkspurs, musk and mimulus, blue nemophila and scarlet columbines, dwarf sunflowers and fritillaria, heartsease and forget-me-not, golden ranunculus and dwarf blue iris—these, and a multitude of flowers familiar to us in gardens, here overspread the land at their own sweet will.

In one morning's ramble I collected upwards of a hundred different flowers, and I was told that in the course of a Californian spring and summer I might find no fewer than six hundred species!

It was a great delight to me to find the jovial round face of the familiar sunflower, beaming a cheery welcome to its Californian birthplace; but we saw only a few blossoms. I was told, however, that there are tracts in the mountain districts to the south where, for miles and miles, successive ridges gleam like gold, owing to the myriads of these gigantic yellow daisies, so closely packed that there is no green to be seen, only a sheet of saffron hue. The same glory overspreads Southern Colorado, where purple asters also abound, and both grow so freely that they even spring up from the turf sods with which the miners roof their huts, giving quite an æsthetic touch to the dingy camps.

Beautiful as were the plains in their robes of flower-embroidered verdure, I craved to reach the beautiful Sierra Nevada; and, hearing that the rapid melting of the snows had opened the roads to the far-famed Yo-Semité Valley, I resolved to start without delay. One afternoon on the railway, and two long days of coaching, brought us to the forest belt.

The railway ran us along a small portion of the vast wheatfield which now extends well-nigh six hundred miles from north to south. However dear to the farmer, it is not attractive to the lover of beautiful, uncultivated nature, and I was glad to escape from its monotony, and

arrive at a region of gently undulating hills, all clothed with rich tall grass of a peculiarly lovely light green, ideal pastures where happy cattle were luxuriating; and here, too, the beautiful grass was but a groundwork whereon were showered masses of vivid crimson and purple, white, scarlet, and gold.

Onward we toiled, uphill and down, winding round about among the foothills, which in places are densely clothed with chaparral (*i.e.* brushwood, with a large proportion of flowering shrubs), and elsewhere are grassy and park-like, adorned with fine clumps of buck-eye and live-oak—in other words, Californian horse-chestnut and ilex. And, far and near, the grassy slopes were tinged with rainbow hues where the bright sunlight played on banks of wild flowers.

As we reached the higher levels, we found deep banks of snow lying in places; but even close by these some kindly blossoms had contrived to expand, and in the shelter of the great pine forest I found some beautiful specimens of a plant altogether new to me (*Sarcodes sanguinea*), a strange, bright-scarlet crimson blossom, like a very fleshy hyacinth. It is called the snow-flower, because it rises right out of the earth as soon as ever the snow melts, after the manner of our snowdrop; but instead of being enfolded in smooth green leaves, each crimson bell is wrapped in a crimson leaflet, which uncurls as it rises above the earth, forming a sort of hyacinthine pyramid of blossom eight inches in height. It has only two or three inches of thick stem, and really suggests little tongues of flame darting out of the newly thawed earth, quite close to snowdrifts. I do not know whether it is found in any other country, but I have never heard of it elsewhere.

When we reached the higher levels, and caught sight of a succession of grand mountain summits all robed in dazzling white, we fully realised our good fortune in having arrived while there was yet sufficient snow to let us see the Sierra Nevada* in its true character.

One farewell shower swept down from the mountains and enfolded us, while we were passing through a belt of magnificent old pines. The falling flakes shrouded the mountains in a filmy gauze-like veil, while the distant clumps of dark pines, wrapped in grey shadow, were indistinct and phantom-like. Those nearer to us loomed gigantic, their vast size exaggerated by the magnifying mist and the swirling of the fitful snow showers. Silently, silently, the soft feather-like flakes fell, not a breath of air stirring to disturb them, as they settled on every twig and spray more lightly than ever butterfly rested on a flower.

Suddenly the clouds cleared off, revealing a heaven more intensely azure than I have ever seen even in the tropics; and then a flood of golden sunlight was outpoured on the beautiful, dazzling earth, and the glory of the forest was beyond all description. Each stately pine seemed transformed to a pyramid of glistening alabaster with strata of

* Sierra Nevada, range of snow,

malachite, as we caught glimpses of the dark-green undersides of the graceful, sweeping boughs, weighed down beneath their burden of myriad snowflakes.

On every side of us, in the low-lying forest or the hanging wood that clothed the steep mountain side, rose ten thousand times ten thousand tall white spires and minarets and pinnacles, as in some idealised Oriental city (but assuredly no marble ever gleamed so purely—not even the dream-like tombs of Agra).

On every grassy reed, each hazel twig and manzanita bush, the light flakes lay in fairy-like crystals—even the silken webs of the busy spiders had caught their share, and now sparkled like jewels in the sunlight. And every great rock-boulder was snow-capped, and each stern, rugged crag was softened by a powder-like dusting, lightly sprinkled wheresoever a crevice or a furrow gave it a chance of resting, and far above all uprose the eternal hills, robed in spotless white, pure and dazzling.

We halted for a couple of nights at a comfortable ranch, in the heart of the forest, beside a picturesque stream known to white men as Big Creek; and thence explored a magnificent grove of glorious old pines, interspersed with majestic specimens of the *Sequoia gigantea*, which people in England will persist in calling Wellingtonia, to the unmitigated and most just annoyance of all Americans.

This is such a forest as can only be seen in California, beautiful beyond all words, with long arcades of stately columns, brown, red, or yellow, representing pines, cedars, and firs of many sorts, each straight as an arrow, and towering from two to three hundred feet in height, to vanish in a crown of interlacing misty green foliage. Such a forest should be the haunt of all good spirits, as in truth the Indians fully believe.

On the fifth day after leaving San Francisco, we reached a mountain ridge about 7,000 feet above the sea. Suddenly we caught our first sight of the Valley, lying about 3,000 feet below us, an abrupt chasm in the great rolling expanse of billowy granite ridges, or I should rather describe it as a vast sunken pit, with perpendicular walls, and carpeted with a level and most verdant meadow, through which flows a river gleaming like quicksilver.

Here and there, a vertical cloud of spray on the face of the huge crags told where some snow-fed stream from the upper ranges had found its way to the brink of the chasm—a perpendicular fall of from two to three thousand feet.

The fall nearest to where we stood was pointed out as the Bridal Veil, but the Indians call it Pohono. It seemed a floating film of finest mist, on which played the loveliest rainbow lights; for the sun was already lowering behind us, and the afternoon shadows were stealing over the Valley, though the light shone clear and bright on the cold white granite crags, and on the glittering snow peaks of the High Sierras.

Each mighty precipice, and rock needle, and strange granite dome,

was pointed out to us by name, as we halted on the summit of the pass ere commencing the steep descent. The entrance to the Valley is guarded by a stupendous square-cut mass of white granite, which the Spanish settlers have dubbed *El Capitan*. It is a grand massive cliff, projecting so far from the main rock wall as to suggest the idea of a huge keep, wherein the *Genii* of the Valley may have braved the siege of the Ice Giants.

I doubt if in the whole rock world another crag exists which can compare with this. Just try to realise its dimensions. A massive face of smooth, cream-coloured granite, half a mile long, half a mile wide, three-fifths of a mile high. Its actual height is 3,300 feet. Think of our beautiful Castle Rock in Edinburgh with its 434 feet, or Dover Castle, 469 feet, or even Arthur's Seat, 822 feet—what pigmies they would seem could some wizard transport them to the base of this grand crag, on whose surface not a blade of grass, not a fern or lichen, finds holding ground, or presumes to tinge the bare clean-cut precipice.

Imagine a crag, just the height of Snowdon, with a lovely snow stream falling perpendicular from its summit to its base, and a second and larger fall in the deep gorge where it joins the great rock-wall of the Valley. The first is nameless, and vanishes with the snows; but the second never quite dries up even in summer. The Indians call it *Luny-oo-too-koo-ya*, to describe the plaintive note of the wood doves which find shelter in the gorge.

Descending to the Valley, we forded the stream which forms "The Bridal Veil," and agreed that if *Pohono* be in truth, as the Indian legend tells, the spirit of an evil wind, it surely must be a repentant and glorified spirit, for nothing so beautiful could be evil. It is a sight to gladden the angels—a most ethereal fall, light as steam, swaying with every breath.

It falls from an overhanging rock, and often the current produced by its own rushing seems to pass beneath the rock, and so checks the whole column, and carries it upward in a wreath of whitest vapour, blending with the true clouds.

When the rainbow plays upon it, it too seems to be wafted up, and floats in a jewelled spray, wherein sapphires and diamonds and opals, topaz and emeralds, all mingle their dazzling tints. At other times, it rushes down in a shower of fairy-like rockets, in what appears to be a perpendicular column, a thousand feet high, and loses itself in a cloud of mist among the tall dark pines which clothe the base of the crag.

A succession of stupendous rock needles have been designated "Cathedral Spires," and one mighty obelisk, a thousand feet in height, towering from a pedestal of two thousand feet more, all of solid granite, is known as *The Sentinel*, keeping watch and ward over the peaceful Valley below, where greenest pastures lie, beside the stillest of waters.

Farther up the Valley, two gigantic Domes of the whitest granite are built up on the foundation of the great encompassing wall. One stands

on each side of the Valley. The north Dome is perfect, like the roof of some vast mosque; but the south or Half Dome is an extraordinary freak of nature very puzzling to geologists, as literally half of this enormous mass of granite has disappeared, leaving no trace of its existence save a sheer precipitous rock face, considerably over four thousand feet in height, from which the corresponding half has evidently broken off, and slipped down into some fearful chasm, which apparently it has been the means of filling up.

Above the Domes, and closing in the upper end of the Valley, is a beautiful snowy mountain, called Cloud's Rest, which, seen from afar, is the most attractive point of all the mountains. But the chief interest within the Valley centres in the glorious falls from which it takes its name, and which burst suddenly upon our amazed vision when we reached the base of the Sentinel Rock. They are so indescribably lovely that I altogether despair of conveying any notion of them in words.

No wonder the Indians reverence the beautiful Yō-Semité Falls. Even the white settlers in the Valley cannot resist their influence, but speak of them with an admiration that amounts to love. Some spend the winter in the Valley, and they told me that if I could see the Falls in their winter robes, all fringed with icicles, I should gain a glimpse of fairyland.

At the base of the great fall the fairies build a real ice palace, sometimes more than a hundred feet high. It is formed by the ever-falling, freezing spray, and the bright sun gleams on this glittering palace of crystal, and the falling water striking upon it shoots off in showers, like myriad opals and diamonds.

But when first I beheld them, on a bright May morning, not an icicle remained, and the Falls were in their glory. I had never dreamt of anything so lovely. I confess that I am not a keen lover of waterfalls in general, and am often inclined to vote them a bore, when enthusiastic people insist on leaving the blessed sunshine to go ever so far down a dank, damp ravine, to see some foolish dribble.

But here we stand in the glorious sunlight, among pine trees a couple of hundred feet in height, and they are pigmies, like ourselves, in presence of even the lowest step of the stately fall which leaps and dashes from so vast a height that it loses all semblance of water. It is a splendid bouquet of glistening rockets, which, instead of rushing heavenward, shoot down as if from the blue canopy which seems to touch the brink, 2,700 feet above us.

Like myriad falling stars they flash, each keeping its separate course for several hundred feet, till at length it blends with ten thousand more in the grand avalanche of frothy, fleecy foam, which for ever and for ever falls, boiling and raging like a whirlpool, among the huge black boulders in the deep caldron below, and throwing back clouds of mist and vapour.

The most exquisite moment occurs when you reach some spot where

the sun's rays, streaming past you, transform the light vapour into brilliant rainbow prisms, which gird the fall with vivid iris bars. As the water-rockets flash through these radiant belts, they seem to carry the colour onwards as they fall; and sometimes it wavers and trembles in the breeze, so that the rainbow knows not where to rest, but forms a moving column of radiant tricolor.

So large a body of water rushing through the air naturally produces a strong current, which, passing between the face of the rock and the fall, carries the latter well forward, so that it becomes the sport of every breeze that dances through the Valley; hence this great column is forever vibrating from side to side, and often forms a semicircular curve.

The width of the stream at the summit is about twenty to thirty feet, but at the base of the Upper Fall it has expanded to a width of fully three hundred feet; and, as the wind carries it to one side or the other, it plays over a space of about a thousand feet in width, of a precipitous rock-face, sixteen hundred feet in depth. That is the height of the Upper Fall.

As seen from below, the Yō-Semité, though divided into three distinct falls, is apparently all on one plane. It is only when you reach some point from which you see it sideways, that you realise that the Great Upper Fall lies fully a quarter of a mile further back than the Middle and Lower Falls, and that it rushes down this space in boiling cascades till it reaches a perpendicular rock, over which it leaps about 600 feet, and then gives a third and final plunge of about 500, making up a total of little under 2,700.

Now, if you can realise that the height of Niagara is 162 feet, you will perceive that if some potent magician could bring it into the Valley, it would be effectually concealed by trees of fully its own height, many far overtopping it.

Niagara of course makes up in width what she lacks in height. The Horseshoe or Canadian Fall is about 150 feet. The width is 2,100 feet. The American Fall is about 160 feet in height, and 1,100 in width. The total width, inclusive of Goat Island, is 4,200 feet.

Niagara not only owes nothing to its accessories, but actually benefits by the total absence of any scenery. There is absolutely nothing in the very uninteresting level country around it to distract the attention from the marvellous beauty of the majestic falls—from the indescribable loveliness of that heavy, waving curtain of emerald-green water, and the ethereal clouds of misty foam on which the rainbows never cease to play, whether in sunshine or moonlight.

Niagara is the type of force and irresistible might. Yō-Semité is the emblem of purity and elegance.

I deemed myself fortunate in finding quarters in the cosy little group of neat wooden bungalows which form the cottage-hotel known as Barnard's, which is by far the most pleasantly situated house in the Valley, and especially in securing a room commanding a perfect view of

the Falls. Indeed, I found my outlook so entrancing that it was three months ere I succeeded in tearing myself away; and, truth to say, another month was embittered by vain regrets that I had done so.

From my window I looked right down into the clear, peaceful river Merced, gliding onward almost imperceptibly through thickets of most fragrant wild yellow azaleas, while an upward glance through a frame of dark pines and tremulous poplars (the Balm of Gilead) revealed the exquisite Falls, whose waters join the Merced a little further down the Valley. So that at all times and seasons I could watch this most fascinating of shaggy "Grizzly Bears" (for such is the meaning of its name)—the ghost of a bear surely, for it is often an ethereal, floating thing.

In strong gales the wind carries the whole body of water high in air, like a snow-storm or a white dust-storm, and sprinkles the mountain summits; and at all times the spray flies like clouds of glittering dust, as if the granite walls were powdered by constant friction.

In a direct line the Falls are only about a quarter of a mile from the house, and sometimes their noise is like the roar of distant thunder—then it comes softened and subdued. It is not quite continuous, but seems to pulsate, at short, regular intervals—a throbbing sound, as if the waters fell in successive leaps.

Sometimes the music of the waters sounds like the tremulous tones of some melodious harp, each vibration of the mighty strings heard separately, in everlasting cadence. At other times, varying with the direction of the breeze, there seemed to be only a low musical murmur, like the humming of a bustling busy bee. Then perhaps a rattle, as if of musketry, suggests the crash of loosened fragments of rock, though the sound is often produced by the mere concussion of air and water. To the same concussion is due the quivering and trembling of the ground, of which you are conscious when standing close to the Falls, as though the very earth were overawed by the might of the rushing waters.

One of my favourite short expeditions was an enchanting scramble through the pine woods, and up a steep canyon over piled-up fragments of rock, to the base of the Lowest Fall, or rather to a sheltered nook just to one side of it—a little oasis of green grass and ferns, whence I could get a view of the Fall *en profile*, and watch it rushing past, forming a most beautiful and unusual foreground to the green Valley seen far below, and the great granite mountains beyond.

As seen from this point, this Fall is magnificent—complete in itself. Yet from a little distance it appears only an insignificant appendage to the Great Fall, and its base is altogether hidden by the trees. I sat for hours watching these falling waters; and attempted to sketch the unsketchable, till I was fairly bewildered by the deep-toned voice of many waters, and the rushing spray, and was glad to return to the quiet green meadows.

The snows on the Sierras were melting rapidly, and by the middle of May all the streams had overflowed their accustomed channels.

Several pleasant paths, which we had explored on first arriving, were flooded, for the Yû-Semité was "in spate"—a boisterous, whirling cataract, thundering and chafing among the boulders. Its waters were now divided into a dozen branches, each a foaming torrent, wearing a channel for itself, as it rushed headlong through pine woods, seeking the placid Merced river, which glides on a dead level from the moment it enters the Valley till it departs thence.

To any but a first-rate walker, a pony or a horse is a downright necessity to whoever wishes to see anything beyond the Valley itself, as it holds you fairly imprisoned till you can scale its walls. Not till then do you gain any idea of the vast expanse of Alpine scenery which lies beyond, range upon range, a world of grey granite and snow, relieved by tracts of dark pine forest.

When we first arrived we felt as if we never could escape from the Valley—there seemed no possible means for any but winged creatures to reach the upper world; but soon we learnt that patient men had devised cunningly contrived zigzag trails, taking advantage of every little ledge and crevice of rock; blasting here, and building there, till they had engineered excellent paths at a safe gradient along the face of what appear to be perpendicular walls of granite, and so, winding to and fro, here following the course of some deep gulch, there taking advantage of a patch of forest, they finally reached the summit, and could look down on the Valley as on a green and silver ribbon lying far below them.

Though the Valley is reserved by the State as a national park, all these trails have been made by private enterprise, at a considerable outlay of labour, time, and money. So the proprietor of each is allowed to levy a toll of from one to two dollars on each passenger. Having paid once, he is free for the season. But few indeed are the travellers who ever allow themselves time to go over any of these grand scenes more than once, and that at railway speed.

As a matter of course, one of our first days in the Valley was devoted to reaching the summit of the Great Fall. The only practicable route by which to reach the base of the Upper Fall is a very circuitous one, retracing the Valley till you ascend zigzagging through a belt of beautiful pines, and so gradually gain the high level.

Having hired sturdy and sure-footed ponies (of which a large number are kept in the Valley), we started one bright clear morning. The views at every turn were magnificent; each fresh aspect of the wonderful Falls helped us more and more to realise their might and majesty.

Can you picture them ever so faintly? The flashing, foaming cataract tumbling almost perpendicularly for half a mile from the brink to the base; first the wild leap of 1,500 feet, dashing headlong into the cup worn by its own ceaseless action on the hard granite rock, then chafing madly among the fallen boulders ere it rushes to the second ledge, ready to repeat the leap.

You look up at the never-ceasing shower of water-rockets till your

eyes are dazzled with their gleaming white, and rest thankfully on the pure blue heaven from which they seem to fall, and the floating spray makes mist among the dark pines till a gleam of sunlight transforms it to a glittering shower of shattered diamonds.

When we reached the base of the Upper Fall, we dismounted, and scrambling over masses of rock, piled in chaos as they fell from the upper crags, we climbed to a great boulder just beyond reach of the spray, and there sat gazing up at the living waters, ever falling, falling, in thousands of separate tongues of foam. Some say it is like a waving plume of snowy feathers, but to me the form of inverted fire-rockets is the only one really descriptive. Sometimes each rushes singly, preserving its perfect form, while others are dispersed in mid-career by the rushing breeze.

In presence of that rocket-shower, falling from a height of 1,600 feet, what dainty miniatures our favourite British waterfalls do seem! I suppose lovely Foyers is the finest fall in Scotland, but when reduced to figures its height is only 212 feet. The Falls of Bruar are 200 feet, the Falls of the Rhine 100, and even the far-famed Staubbach only attains 900 feet.

You do not realise the full majesty of this most worshipful monarch of the water-gods till you have crept meekly to his feet, as we did, and there remain spell-bound, overawed by the glory of the scene. The sense of irresistible power of that headlong rush of bright, gleaming waters, the utter restlessness of their ceaseless motion, and their thunderous roar as they strike the rocky basin far below, soon become overpowering—eyes and brain are alike bewildered. And besides the direct downward movement, spirit-like clouds of spray float around, drifting with every current of wind, softening the too dazzling brightness of the white foam, but adding to the giddy complex motion of the whole.

The face of the great crag overhangs a little, so that as the waters are thrown forward, they leave a dry space behind the fall at the base of the cliff, a long broad passage where those who are so inclined can enter, and, standing behind the curtain of falling waters, can listen to the rushing wind, and try how near danger they can venture without accident. When only a light summer stream is falling, and the sun is shining upon it, the effect produced is that of a shimmering shower of diamonds. But when the storm flood is heavy, a visit to this strange spot is risky, as the approach to it involves a drenching from the heavy spray; so we were nowise tempted, but, tearing ourselves away from this beautiful and most fascinating spot, we commenced the steep ascent through Comini Canyon.

The trail is led up by such innumerable zigzags that a tolerably easy grade has been attained, and my sturdy pony climbed up without the slightest hesitation. What with excavations in some places, and building up rock foundation in others, the tracing and making of such a trail, and then the constant repairs consequent on falling rocks or melting snows, imply both genius and ceaseless care.

The Canyon heads actually at the summit of the Falls, and there seems no sort of reason why the Yö-Semité Creek should not have rushed down the slope instead of selecting the headlong course which it has adopted; for which, however, we may be most deeply grateful to it.

By its ceaseless friction it has so polished the granite rock over which it flows, that to attempt a near approach is just like walking on ice. It is horribly dangerous, as the first slip would inevitably prove the last. Yet the fascination is irresistible, so I crawled to the brink on hands and knees, and there lay watching the leaping waters as they rushed past me, down, down, down, till the abyss of white foam was merged in the ever-swaying, ever-varying cloud of spray, while a thousand mingling echoes rose from the rocky world below. It was awesome beyond all words. Far, far beneath us, faintly seen through the floating mists, the Valley lay bathed in sunlight, like a dream of some other world.

The Yö-Semité Creek is a snow-fed stream which rises on the west side of the alpine group of which Mount Hoffmann is chief, lying about ten miles north-east of the Valley. The course lies over a bed of bare granite rock; and as it is fed exclusively by the melting snow, it follows that as the season advances it must shrink to a most insignificant rivulet.

We found the snow still lying deep in the unsunned gorges. There had been a "flurry," followed by a night of frost, and a light powdering of glittering snow crystals still sparkled in the bright sunlight, marking the intricate tracery of the leafless boughs. Every grassy reed was snow-tipped, and snow-feathers lay softly on the drooping brambles and the rich brown tufts of lichen.

We were anxious to reach a high point, known as Eagle's Peak (4,000 feet above the Valley), which commands a magnificent view of the Sierras on every side; but as we ascended the snow became deeper and deeper, so, as the ride was neither safe nor pleasant, we agreed to defer it till the season was further advanced.

As it was, we saw several fine snow-peaks in the distance, forming a dazzling crest for the interminable granite ranges, which lay upheaved all around, presenting a wilderness of bare ridges, with here and there a fantastic knob or pinnacle, and on every side patches of dark green forest. The general effect of the landscape was that of a troubled grey sea, here and there tinged with dull green.

Such a general view gave us a better idea of the relative size of the giant crags around us, especially of the stupendous granite Domes. This bird's-eye view also enabled us to realise the true geological aspect of the Valley itself, as a huge sunken pit—no chasm, but the blank left by a portion of the earth's surface having actually subsided.

Except in point of size the Yö-Semité is not unique in its formation; indeed, its name is now used to describe a type of valley of which several have been discovered in the Sierras. Such geological *faults* as have caused this very singular depression exist in many countries. Two

notable examples occur in the Blue Mountains of Australia, where two gigantic pits occur, known as Govat's Leap and the Weather-board, at each of which I have stood on the brink of a deep gorge enclosed by vertical cliffs as steep as these, and have looked on the crowns of giant ferns and trees lying apparently a couple of thousand feet below us—a sanctuary untrodden by human foot. But those cliffs of reddish sandstone do not give one the same feeling of solidity and strength as these granite crags, which fill one with ever-increasing wonder, the longer one gazes upon them.

Not very far from the Yō-Semité lies the Hetch-Hetchy Valley, which, though on a somewhat smaller scale, singularly reproduces all the main features of its great relation. It lies on the course of a beautiful river, known as the Cathedral Creek, because it rises in a fantastic Gothic-looking rock mountain, which has been named Cathedral Peak.

There are some beautiful falls just where this stream joins the Tuolumne, and above these rises a stupendous mass of granite known as the Grand Mountain. It is a huge bare rock 4,000 feet in height. Just imagine what a great solid giant! nearly a thousand feet higher than the mighty crag, El Capitan, which guards the entrance of Yō-Semité.

Below this the gorge narrows and the river flows between steep rock walls till it enters the Hetch-Hetchy, which is a crescent-shaped valley about three miles in length and half a mile wide at the broadest part. It lies 3,650 feet above the sea, and, just as in Yō-Semité, its level green meadows are sunk between high vertical granite crags.

One of these is almost a fac-simile of El Capitan, but on a smaller scale, being *only* 1,800 feet high. When the snows are melting in spring it has just such a fall as that which beautifies its great kinsman at the same season. There is also a large rock 2,270 feet high, which strongly resembles the Cathedral Rock in the Yō-Semité.

Then the great Hetch-Hetchy Fall is almost a *replica* of the "Great Grizzly." Certainly it is *only* 1,700 feet high, and is less perpendicular than the Yō-Semité Fall; but it has a larger volume of water, and is exceedingly beautiful. In the spring-time many additional falls pour into the Valley, which terminates in a gorge so narrow that the waters thus accumulated cannot escape, but form a large lake, flooding the meadows, which later in the season afford pasturage to the flocks of sheep and herds of cattle which are driven up from Big Oak Flat.

There is a good deal of fine timber in the Valley, which is undoubtedly exceedingly grand, though it cannot wrest the pre-eminence from the majestic Valley, which, first discovered, is now the accepted type of all such.

Mr. John Muir describes several lovely valleys of the same formation further to the south, in the heart of that rugged wilderness of peaks and canyons where the foaming tributaries of the San Joaquin and King's rivers take their rise. He found the most beautiful of them all near the source of the former—a canyon two miles long and half a mile broad, hemmed in by perpendicular granite crags, and the crystal river

flowing through peaceful groves and meadows, haunted by deer and grouse and joyous singing birds.

Thence he passed into a wilder, narrower gorge, with walls rising perpendicularly from two to four thousand feet above the roaring river. "At the head of the Valley," he says, "the main canyon forks, *as is found to be the case in all Yō-Semité's*."

Mr. Muir, however, attributes the formation of that valley to the action of two vast ice-rivers in the glacial period. But now the free, beautiful San Joaquin river, new-born from its glacial fountain, enters the valley in a glorious cascade, its glad waters overleaping granite crags two thousand feet in height.

Truly these Californian Alps hold treasures of delight for lovers of all beautiful nature, who on their parts can bring strength and energy for mountaineering—a sure foot, a steady head, and any amount of endurance.

With respect to the marvellous rounded Domes, it is known that there are dome-shaped masses in all regions where granite prevails; but they are found in the Sierra Nevada on a grander scale than elsewhere. The only thing altogether unique is the Split Dome. The North Dome, on the opposite side of the Valley, has many near relations. They are built up of thick layers of granite, huge concentric plates, overlapping one another in some places, so as to render them inaccessible. Some of these granite flakes are about twenty feet thick, others only three or four feet, and they are curved much in the same way as the basaltic pillars in some of the caves in the Isle of Skye and on the Irish coast; but there is nothing columnar in their appearance, which is rather suggestive of armour-plating, and reminded me of the scales of a gigantic armadillo.

There seems to be no doubt that this peculiar formation was produced by the combined work of Fire and Frost; but opinions appear to be divided as to whether the granite layers were curved by the vast weight of ice as the glaciers passed over them, or whether the granite took these curves during the process of cooling, and the glaciers merely polished the outer surface as they passed over the mountains, grinding and furrowing them with deep seams, caused by the gravel and rocks they carried with them—a remarkably coarse form of sand-paper, applied with a very heavy hand! I believe the latter is the more generally accepted theory.

The North Dome is lower by 1,300 feet than its *vis-à-vis*. Its actual height above the Valley is 3,725 feet. It is built up on the summit of a curious rock face, which has taken the form of Cyclopean arches, and the whole is really suggestive of the great marble archway and silvery-grey cupola of some vast Eastern shrine. On the side facing the Valley great flakes so overhang one another that this mountain, though apparently forming an easy curve, is practically inaccessible from that direction; but on the north side it slopes away easily in a long ridge easy of ascent.

But the Split Dome is a very different matter. While the side

facing the Valley is absolutely vertical, showing where the massive mountain of rock was cleft in twain, the remaining half presents a rounded summit, sloping downward at a very steep incline, which becomes steeper and steeper as it descends, till at the base it becomes quite precipitous.

For many years it was considered altogether inaccessible, but at length it has been scaled by an energetic, determined Scotchman, George Anderson by name, a Montrose man, who has taken up his abode in the beautiful Valley, and now looks on the Half Dome with such mingled pride and veneration that he is never likely to leave its shadow.

It was in 1875 that he determined to reach the summit, if mortal man could accomplish the feat; climbing goat-like along dizzy ledges, and clinging like a fly to every crevice that could afford him foothold, he reached the point where hitherto the boldest cragsmen had been foiled. Here he halted till he had drilled a hole in the rock, and securely fixed an iron stanchion with an eye-bolt, through which he passed a strong rope. Then resting on his frail support he was able to reach further, and to drill a second hole, and fix another eye-bolt. From this point of vantage he could secure a third, carrying the rope through every bolt, and always securing it at the upper end.

Thus step by step he crept upward, till at last he had drilled holes and driven in iron stanchions right up the vast granite slab, securing eleven hundred feet of rope. Then rounding the mighty shoulder, he stood triumphant on the summit, and there to his amazement he found a level space of about seven acres, where not only grasses have spread a green carpet, but seven gnarled and stunted old pines, of three different kinds, have contrived to take root, and, defying storms and tempests, maintain their existence on this bleak, bare summit.

Having thus made the ascent a possibility, Anderson's delight now is to induce enterprising climbers to draw themselves up by his rope ferry, the manner of proceeding being to keep one foot on either side of the rope, and, retaining a good grip of the rope itself, gradually to haul themselves up to the summit, there remain for a while lost in wonder at the grand bird's-eye view, and then climb down backward.

It is all right so long as the stanchions hold firm, and the rope does not break; but should this simple accident occur, there would not be the faintest possibility of rescue; indeed, it would be no easy task to recover the battered and mutilated remains of any poor wretch who might fall from this majestic Dome. A leap from the summit of St. Paul's would be child's play in comparison; and a man troubled with suicidal mania would find it hard to look down from such a precipice—a sheer fall of five thousand feet—and resist the temptation to cast himself down. For my own part I concluded that there were views well-nigh as grand to be obtained at far less risk, and so I resisted all my countryman's persuasions to attempt this difficult and dangerous feat.

Richard Crashaw.

No sketch of the English literature of the middle of the seventeenth century can pretend to be complete if it does not tell us something of that serried throng of poets militant who gave in their allegiance to Laud, and became ornaments and then martyrs of the High Church party. Their piety was much more articulate and objective than that which had inspired the hymn-writers and various divine songsters of an earlier age; an element of political conviction, of anger and apprehension, gave ardour and tension to their song. They were conservative and passive, but not oblivious to the tendencies of the time, and the gathering flood of Puritanism forced them, to use an image that they would not themselves have disdained, to climb on to the very altar-step of ritualism, or even in extreme instances to take wing for the mystic heights of Rome itself. It is from such extreme instances as the latter that we learn to gauge their emotion and their desperation, and it is therefore Crashaw rather than Herbert whom we select for the consideration of a typical specimen of the High Church poets. Nor is it only the hysterical intensity of Crashaw's convictions which marks him out for our present purpose; his position in history, his manhood spent in the last years of the reign of "Thorough," and in the very forefront of the crisis, give him a greater claim upon us than Herbert, who died before Laud succeeded to the Primacy, or Vaughan, who was still a boy when Strafford was executed. There are many other points of view from which Crashaw is of special interest; his works present the only important contribution to English literature made by a pronounced Catholic, embodying Catholic doctrine, during the whole of the seventeenth century, while as a poet, although extremely unequal, he rises, at his best, to a mounting fervour which is quite electrical, and hardly rivalled in its kind before or since. Nor is the story of his life, brief and vague though its outline may be, unworthy of having inspired, as it has evidently done, that noble romance of *John Inglesant* which all the world has just been reading with so much curiosity and delight.

It has remained for Dr. Grosart to discover that Crashaw, who has hitherto been supposed to have been born in 1616, must really have seen the light in 1612. His father, the Rev. William Crashaw, Vicar of Whitechapel and preacher at the Temple, was a notable Puritan divine. Forty years of age when his son was born, William Crashaw had grown up within the vehement and instant fear of Papal aggression, and had but become fiercer in his love for a simple Protestantism under the irritating pressure of James the First's decisions. His numerous tracts and

sermons are almost entirely devoted to an exposure of what he conceived to be the fatal errors of Rome, and their titles and contents have often been referred to in order to emphasise the difference between their sturdy Protestantism and his son's adoring Mysticism. The suggestive title-page of the *Bespotted Jesuit*, however, is now proved to have been added by a zealous hand after his death; it is quite plain, at the same time, that he would not have shrunk from saying "bespotted," or something far worse, if it had occurred to him so to distinguish a Jesuit, a monk, or a friar. This vigorous personage was the intimate friend of Usher, who is said to have baptised Richard Crashaw, and to have buried a second Mrs. Crashaw, stepmother to the poet, who died at the age of twenty-four, in 1620. It is pleasant to read the great divine's praise of "her singular motherly affection to the child of her predecessor." We learn also that she was a gentlewoman of considerable beauty and accomplishment, a good singer and dancer, and that she gave up the vanities of the world to marry a clergyman who may have been grim and who was certainly elderly. But of Crashaw's own mother we hear not a word, and even her Christian name is missing.

The boy was admitted to the Charterhouse. In October 1626 his father died, leaving him an orphan at fourteen. His childhood is an absolute blank, until we find him elected, at the rather advanced age of nineteen, to be a scholar of Pembroke Hall, Cambridge, on July 6, 1631. He became a matriculated pensioner of Pembroke on March 26, 1632; a Bachelor of Arts in 1634, was transferred to Peterhouse on November 26, 1636, was elected a fellow of that college in 1637, and became a Master of Arts in 1638. He was finally ejected, in company with a large number of other Royalist gentlemen, by the Earl of Manchester, on June 11, 1644. These barren statements give us but little power of realising the poet's life at Cambridge during thirteen years of residence, but it is possible to supplement them with certain facts and illustrations which enable us to see the progress of this delicate spirit through a rough and perilous age. The master of Pembroke, Dr. Benjamin Lany, was an old friend of Crashaw's father, and there can be little doubt that the boy was sent to that college to be under his personal protection. Lany, as far as we can collect an impression of his views, was a stout Protestant, whose opinions had at one time coincided with those of the author of the *Bespotted Jesuit*, but who now was leaning more and more in a Laudian direction, and to whom neither ritual nor a flowery poetical diction was distasteful. We really know Dr. Lany almost entirely through a copy of English verses addressed by him to the elder Crashaw, and through another copy of Latin verses addressed to him by the younger Crashaw. In the latter he is spoken of as one around whom young poets throng with their tributes of verse, as "the dear guardian of the Pierian flock," and as one whose habit it is to encourage and guide the children of the Muses. It is, therefore, not unlikely that the transition between the grim

Puritanism of his father's household and the fervid Anglicanism of Cambridge was made easy to the youth by the personal character and guidance of Dr. Benjamin Lany. It would be interesting to know whether or not he had begun to compose poetry before going up to the University. It is at all events certain that he was busy versifying almost immediately on his arrival. He was stimulated into the production, or I am afraid we must say the manufacture, of an extraordinary number of exercises, in English and Latin, by the death of William Herries, a promising undergraduate of his own college, who seems to have died rather suddenly in October 1631, when Crashaw had been at Cambridge only three months. Four of these elegies on a single person pleased their author sufficiently to be retained by him for a prominent position in his *Delights of the Muses* fifteen years afterwards, and others exist and have been printed. Genuine grief does not bewail itself with this fluency, or upon so many stops, and indeed all these pieces seem to be dictated rather by an official than a personal regret. It is interesting, however, to find in them that at the age of twenty Crashaw already possessed the germ of that fine metrical skill and coloured fancy which afterwards distinguished him. The extreme vehemence of praise, the laudation of this youth for wit, learning, piety, and physical beauty, was not calculated to startle any one in the seventeenth century, and was probably accepted by the entire college, from Dr. Lany downwards, as being the proper and becoming, and indeed the only possible tone for a young poet to adopt on a melancholy occasion of the kind. The alternations of life and death are dwelt upon in flowing numbers :—

For the laurel in his verse,
The sullen cypress o'er his hearse ;
For a silver-crowned head,
A dirty pillow in death's bed ;
For so dear, so deep a trust,
Sad requital, so much dust !

These verses belong to the school of Ben Jonson, but with a difference ; there is an indefinable touch of brightness and colour about them, which may have suggested to Crashaw's college friends the advent of a new poet. Moreover these elegies on Herries are valuable to us as belonging certainly to the year 1631, when neither Donne, Herbert, nor Habington, although well known in private circles, had been brought before the world as poets. It is very important to observe that Crashaw had already formed the foundation of his lyrical style at a time when it is exceedingly improbable that he can have read a line of Donne's MSS. Certain tendencies were in the air, and poets in various provinces sounded the same note simultaneously and with unconscious unanimity.

Crashaw's first public appearance was made in a little Latin anthology prepared in 1632 to congratulate Charles I. on the preservation of his health. Repeatedly, through his college career, he was called upon

to contribute to those learned garlands of respectful song which were all remembered against the University when that "nest of serpents" fell into the hands of the Puritans. In 1634 Crashaw published a little volume of his Latin verses, entitled *Epigrammatum Sacrorum Liber*, following a fashion which was already antiquated, and of which John Owen's famous collection had been a typical example. One of these epigrams contains the celebrated conceit on the miracle of the water turned into wine, *Nympha pudica Deum vidit, et erubuit*, which has been very felicitously translated—

The conscious water saw its God and blushed.

It would be very interesting, but it is unfortunately impossible, to trace the gradual transformation which the religious nature of Crashaw underwent. He found a very fervid piety maintained by certain young men at Cambridge, and he adopted their doctrines while surpassing them in zeal. He had already, we cannot doubt, passed far from the narrow rigour of his father's faith when he came under the influence of the saintly Nicholas Ferrar, whose famous community at Little Gidding gave a final stamp to his character. It is to be lamented that when John Ferrar wrote his deeply interesting life of his brother it did not occur to him to give us fuller particulars of Crashaw; we must, however, be grateful for what he has given. The family of Ferrars and Colletts retired to their lonely manor-house of Little Gidding, in Huntingdonshire, in 1625. Nicholas, already thirty-four years of age, and weary of a career of action, had determined to abandon the world and to adopt a life of pious retirement. The "Protestant Nunnery," a name given to it in malice by the Puritans, was an establishment conducted on purely unaffected principles, and took its peculiar colouring slowly and unconsciously, as these grave persons, all of one mind, and unopposed in their country solitude, found more and more opportunity of following the natural bent of their inclinations. Until the beauty of their books and the report of their singular devotion had attracted the personal notice of the King, the colony at Little Gidding seems to have been but little distracted by visitors or perturbed by injudicious praise or blame. But the King passed on to Cambridge inflamed with the holy loyalty of these gentle people, and his subjects in the University woke up to the importance of the ritual and the monastic seclusion practised at Little Gidding. Those who were like-minded contended for the honour of following Nicholas Ferrar from the oratory to the church and from the church to the hospital in that round of devotion and benefaction which made life busy in the Protestant Nunnery.

But it was when Mrs. Ferrar died in 1635 that the saintly life at Gidding reached its final ecstasy and fervour. The old lady had watched over the physical welfare of the community, and had preserved sufficient authority over her son Nicholas to prevent him from entirely neglecting what the body craves in sleep and food. But her death released him

from all such obligation, and after the day of her funeral he never slept in a bed again, but for the rest of his life wrapped himself in a bearskin and lay upon the floor when nature overwhelmed him and obliged him to take brief snatches of sleep between his long prayers and vigils. He became more exalted, more unearthly, and of course more attractive than ever to those young ascetics who, like Crashaw, tried to imitate him in the churches and chapels of Cambridge, and who took every opportunity of riding over to Little Gidding to refresh their faith and passion by intercourse with the saintly household. We know that Crashaw was one of these, that he was in constant communion with Nicholas Ferrar until the death of the latter in the winter of 1637, and that when he could not join in the midnight functions at Little Gidding he would emulate the vigils of his teacher by nightly watches in the church of Little St. Mary's, which was close to his new college of Peterhouse.

If the civil war had never broken out, it is probable that Crashaw would never have left the Anglican communion. Nicholas Ferrar, who had sympathies for the ritual and even for the dogmas of Rome, which had been unheard of a generation earlier, stayed his foot very firmly outside the Papal precincts. He died deliberately satisfied with the English forms of faith. He had never taken orders, and, what is still more strange, it seems that Crashaw never did; but he took the warmest interest in ecclesiastical affairs, and was one of those who clamoured importunately for the restoration of the college chapel of Peterhouse, which was performed during his fellowship. And when no longer he was forced at midnight to cross the college bounds and enter the neighbouring chancel of Little St. Mary's, there can be no doubt that he spent more hours than ever in prayer under the shadow of the wings of the great gold angels of Peterhouse chapel, and among the hundred saints and cherubs, with "God the Father in a chair, holding a glass in His hand," which formed part of the ancient ornament of this splendid building. There, in a trance of orison, with the rich notes of the organ pouring upon him and the light from the antique windows surrounding him, the Puritan Commission found him unaware. On December 21, 1643, Mr. Horscot and his soldiers sacked the chapel of Peterhouse, pulling down the images and breaking the windows. This was but a local realisation of the universal fact that the reign of Laudian ceremonial was over. Laud himself was executed three weeks later, and the very foundations of episcopacy in England were shaken. Cambridge formed a helpless island in a sea of Puritan counties, and in the summer of 1644 the Earl of Manchester, on his way to the siege of York, lingered in the eastern University long enough to hold out the alternative of the Covenant or of ejection to every master and fellow. On June 11 five fellows of Peterhouse, Crashaw of course being one of them, were forcibly driven out, and five Puritans appointed in their place.

It seems probable that Crashaw proceeded at once to Oxford, where

the King was still for a few months undisturbed. It is at least natural that he should have done so, since in 1641 he had been incorporated a member of the sister University, and had been that year in residence at Oxford. It may even be conjectured that the events which followed the execution of Strafford so terrified the timid scholar that he removed to the western and more loyal University, and was ejected from Peterhouse during his absence. However this may be, his position must have become desperate soon after 1644, and he may even have been concealed at Newnham Paddox by his friends the Earl and Countess of Denbigh until the defeat at Naseby finally overwhelmed the Royalist party in ruin. It was at this time that the poet seems to have entered the Catholic Church. His religious nature possessed what Milton calls "a fugitive and cloistered virtue;" to him it must have seemed that the English ritual was destroyed, its bishops scattered, its creed disused, its authority ridiculed; and from the face of anarchy this shrinking soul fled to the staunch and conservative arms of Rome. He had long been meditating the possibility of this step, although very probably it was forced upon him at last harshly and suddenly. Cowley, who was always a sincere Anglican, refers to his friend's conversion to Rome with a charming tact and delicacy:—

Pardon, my mother Church, if I consent
That angels led him when from thee he went;
For even in error sure no danger is
When joined with so much piety as his.
Ah! mighty God, with shame I speak't, and grief;
Ah! that our greatest faults were in belief!

Regarding the sanctity and single-heartedness of the unfortunate Crashaw there is but one testimony. The only dissentient voice is that of the harsh and ribald Prynne, whose accusation is a eulogy. And now, having attempted to conduct the sacred poet to the great crisis of his life, let us leave him there for a while, and consider those poems which his first editor tells us were written beneath the wings of God, when Crashaw lodged under Tertullian's roof of angels at Peterhouse, "where he made his nest more gladly than David's swallow near the house of God, and, like a primitive saint, offered more prayers in the night than others usually offer in the day."

Crashaw's English poems were first published in 1646, soon after his arrival in Paris. He was at that time in his thirty-fourth year, and the volume contains his best and most mature as well as his crudest pieces. It is indeed a collection of juvenile and manly verses thrown together with scarcely a hint of arrangement, the uncriticised labour of fifteen years. The title is *Steps to the Temple, Sacred Poems, with other Delights of the Muses*. The sacred poems are so styled by his anonymous editor because they are "steps for happy souls to climb heaven by;" the *Delights of the Muses* are entirely secular, and the two divisions of the book, therefore, reverse the order of Herrick's similarly edited *Hes-*

perides and *Noble Numbers*. The *Steps to the Temple* are distinguished at once from the collection with which it is most natural to compare them, the *Temple* of Herbert, by the fact that they are not poems of experience, but of ecstasy, not of meditation, but of devotion. Herbert, and with him most of the sacred poets of the age, are autobiographical; they analyse their emotions, they take themselves to task, they record their struggles, their defeats, their consolation. But if the azure cherubim of introspection are the dominant muses of English sacred verse, the flame-coloured seraph of worship reigns in that of Crashaw. He has made himself familiar with all the amorous phraseology of the Catholic metaphysicians; he has read the passionate canticles of St. John of the Cross, the books of the Carmelite nun, St. Teresa, and all the other rosy and fiery contributions to ecclesiastical literature laid by Spain at the feet of the Pope during the closing decades of the sixteenth century. The virginal courage and ardour of St. Teresa inspire Crashaw with his loveliest and most faultless verses. We need not share nor even sympathise with the sentiment of such lines as these to acknowledge that they belong to the highest order of lyrical writing:—

Thou art Love's victim, and must die
 A death more mystical and high;
 Into Love's arms thou shalt let fall
 A still-surviving funeral.
 His is the dart must make thy death,
 Whose stroke will taste thy hallowed breath—
 A dart thrice dipped in that rich flame
 Which writes thy spouse's radiant name
 Upon the roof of heaven, where aye
 It shines and with a sovereign ray
 Beats bright upon the burning faces
 Of souls which in that name's sweet graces
 Find everlasting smiles. So rare,
 So spiritual, pure, and fair,
 Must be the immortal instrument
 Upon whose choice point shall be spent
 A life so loved; and that there be
 Fit executioners for thee,
 The fairest first-born sons of fire,
 Blest seraphim, shall leave their choir,
 And turn Love's soldiers, upon thee
 To exercise their archery.

Nor in the poem from which these lines are quoted does this melodious rapture flag during nearly two hundred verses. But such a sustained flight is rare, as in the similar poem of "The Flaming Heart," also addressed to St. Teresa, where, after a long prelude of frigid and tuneless conceits, it is only at the very close that the poet suddenly strikes upon this golden chord of ecstasy:—

Let all thy scattered shafts of light, that play
 Among the leaves of thy large books of day,

Combined against this breast at once break in,
 And take away from me myself and sin;
 This gracious robbery shall thy bounty be,
 And my best fortunes such fair spoils of me.

O thou undaunted daughter of desires!

By all thy dower of lights and fires,

By all the eagle in thee, all the dove,

By all thy lives and deaths of love,

By thy large draughts of intellectual day

And by thy thirsts of love more large than they,

By all thy brim-filled bowls of fierce desire,

By thy last morning's draught of liquid fire,

By the full kingdom of that final kiss

That seized thy parting soul and sealed thee His,

By all the heaven thou hast in Him,

Fair sister of the seraphim!

By all of thine we have in thee—

Leave nothing of myself in me;

Let me so read thy life that I

Unto all life of mine may die.

If Crashaw had left us nothing more than these two fragments, we should be able to distinguish him by them among English poets. He is the solitary representative of the poetry of Catholic psychology which England possessed until our own days; and Germany has one no less unique in Friedrich Spe. I do not know that any critic has compared Spe and Crashaw, but they throw lights upon the genius of one another which may seasonably detain us for a while. The great Catholic poet of Germany during the seventeenth century was born in 1591. Like Crashaw, he was set in motion by the Spanish Mystics; like him he stood on the verge of a great poetical revolution without being in the least affected by it. To Waller and to Opitz, with their new dry systems of precise prosody, Crashaw and Spe owed nothing; they were purely romantic and emotional in style. Spe was born a Catholic, spent all his life among the Jesuits, and died, worn out with good works and immortalised by an heroic struggle against the system of persecution for witchcraft, in the hospital of Trèves, in 1635, just when Crashaw was becoming enthralled by the delicious mysteries of Little Gidding. Both of them wrote Jesuit eclogues. In Spe the shepherd winds his five best roses into a garland for the infant Jesus; in Crashaw he entertains the "starry stranger" with conceits about his diamond eyes and the red leaves of his lips. In each poet there is an hysterical delight in blood and in the details of martyrdom, in each a shrill and frantic falsetto that jars on the modern ear, in each a sweetness of diction and purity of fancy that redeem a hundred faults.* The poems of Spe, entitled *Trutz-Nachtigal*,

* As an illustration of almost all these qualities, and as a specimen of Spe's metrical gifts, I give one stanza from the *Trutz-Nachtigal* :—

Aus der Seiten

Lan sich leiten

were first printed in 1649, the year that Crashaw died. The chief distinction between Spe and Crashaw is, in the first place, that Crashaw is by far the greater and more varied of the two as regards poetical gifts, and, secondly, that while Spe was inspired by the national *Völklied*, and introduced its effects into his song, Crashaw was an adept in every refinement of metrical structure which had been invented by the poet artists of England, Spain, and Italy. The progress of our poetical literature in the seventeenth century will never be thoroughly explained until some competent scholar shall examine the influence of Spanish poetry upon our own. This influence seems to be particularly strong in the case of Donne, and in the next generation in that of Crashaw. I am not sufficiently familiar with Spanish poetry to give an opinion on this subject which is of much value; but as I write I have open before me the works of Gongora, and I find in the general disposition of his *Octavas Sacras* and in the style of his *Canciones* resemblances to the staves introduced to us by Crashaw which can scarcely be accidental. We know that the latter "was excellent in Italian and Spanish," and we are thus led on to consider the more obvious debt which he owed to the contemporary poetry of Italy. One of the largest pieces of work which he undertook was the translation of the first canto of the *Strage degli Innocenti*, or "Massacre of the Innocents," a famous poem by the Neapolitan Cavaliere Marini, who had died in 1625. Crashaw has thrown a great deal of dignity and fancy into this version, which, however, outdoes the original in ingenious illustration, as the true Marinists, such as Achillini, outdid Marini in their conceited sonnets. Crashaw, in fact, is a genuine Marinist, the happiest specimen which we possess in English, for he preserves a high level of fantastic foppery, and seldom, at his worst, sinks to those crude animal imagings—illustrations from food, for instance—which occasionally make such writers as Habington and Carew not merely ridiculous but repulsive.

In criticising with severity the piece on Mary Magdalene which stands in the forefront of Crashaw's poems, and bears the title of "The Weeper," I have the misfortune to find myself at variance with most of his admirers. I cannot, however, avoid the conviction that the obtrusion of this eccentric piece on the threshold of his shrine has driven away from it many a would-be worshipper. If language be ever liable to abuse in the hands

Rote Strahlen wie Korall;
 Aus der Seiten
 Lan sich leiten
 Weisse Wässer wie Krystal!
 O du reines,
 Hübsch und feines
 Bächlein von Korall und Glas,
 Nit noch weiche,
 Nit entschleiche,
 O Rubin und Perlengass!

of a clever poet, it is surely outraged here. Every extravagant and inappropriate image is dragged to do service to this small idea—namely, that the Magdalen is for ever weeping. Her eyes, therefore, are sister springs, parents of rills, thawing crystal, hills of snow, heavens of ever-falling stars, eternal breakfasts for brisk cherubs, sweating boughs of balsam, nests of milky doves, a voluntary mint of silver, and Heaven knows how many more incongruous objects, from one to another of which the labouring fancy flits in despair and bewilderment. In this poem all is resigned to ingenuity; we are not moved or softened, we are merely startled, and the irritated reader is at last appeased for the fatigues he has endured by a frank guffaw, when he sees the poet, at his wits' end for a simile, plunge into the abyss of absurdity, and style the eyes of the Magdalen

Two walking baths, two weeping motions,
Portable and compendious oceans.

These are the worst lines in Crashaw. They are perhaps the worst in all English poetry, but they must not be omitted here, since they indicate to us the principal danger to which not he only but most of his compeers were liable. It was from the tendency to call a pair of eyes "portable and compendious oceans" that Waller and Dryden, after both of them stumbling on the same stone in their youth, finally delivered us. It is useless to linger with indulgence over the stanzas of a poem like "The Weeper," simply because many of the images are in themselves pretty. The system upon which these juvenile pieces of Crashaw are written is in itself indefensible, and is founded upon what Mr. Matthew Arnold calls "an incurable defect of style."

Crashaw, however, possesses style, or he would not deserve the eminent place he holds among our poets. The ode in praise of Teresa, written while the author was still among the Protestants, and therefore probably about 1642, has already been cited here. It is an exquisite composition, full of real vision, music of the most delicate order, and imagery which, although very profuse and ornate, is always subordinated to the moral meaning and to the progress of the poem. The "Shepherd's Hymn," too, is truly ingenious and graceful, with its pretty pastoral tenderness. "On Mr. G. Herbert's Book sent to a Gentleman" evidently belongs to the St. Teresa period, and contains the same charm. The lyrical epistle persuading the Countess of Denbigh to join the Roman communion contains extraordinary felicities, and seems throbbing with tenderness and passion. We have already drawn attention to the splendid close of "The Flaming Heart." There is perhaps no other of the sacred poems in the volume of 1646 which can be commended in its entirety. Hardly one but contains felicities; the duller is brightened by such flashes of genius as—

Lo, how the thirsty lands
Gasp for the golden showers with long-stretch'd hands!

But the poems are hard, dull, and laborious, the exercises of a saint in-

dead, but untouched by inspiration, human or Divine. We have to return to the incomparable "Hymn to St. Teresa" to remind ourselves of what heights this poet was capable.

There can be very little doubt that Crashaw regarded the second section of his book, the secular *Delights of the Muses*, as far inferior in value and importance to the *Steps to the Temple*. That is not, however, a view in which the modern reader can coincide, and it is rather the ingenuity of his human poems than the passion of his Divine which has given him a prominent place among poets. The *Delights* open with the celebrated piece called "Muse's Duel," paraphrased from the Latin of Strada. As one frequently sees a reference to the "Latin poet Strada," it may be worth while to remark that Famianus Strada was not a poet at all, but a lecturer in the Jesuit colleges. He belonged to Crashaw's own age, having been born in 1572, and dying in the year of the English poet's death, 1649. The piece on the rivalry of the musician and the nightingale was published first at Cologne in 1617, in a volume of *Pro-lusiones* on rhetoric and poetry, and occurs in the sixth lecture of the second course on poetic style. The Jesuit rhetorician has been trying to familiarise his pupils with the style of the great classic poets by reciting to them passages in imitation of Ovid, Lucretius, Lucan, and the rest, and at last he comes to Claudian. This, he says, is an imitation of the style of Claudius, and so he gives us the lines which have become so famous. That a single fragment in a school book should suddenly take root and blossom in European literature, when all else that its voluminous author wrote and said was promptly forgotten, is very curious, but not unprecedented. In England the first person who adopted or adapted Strada's exercise was John Ford, in his play of *The Lover's Melancholy*, in 1629. Dr. Grosart found another early version among the Lansdowne MSS., and Ambrose Phillips a century later essayed it. There are numerous references to it in other literatures than ours, and in the present age M. François Coppée has introduced it with charming effect into his pretty comedy of *Le Luthier de Crémone*. Thus the schoolmaster's task, set as a guide to the manner of Claudian, has achieved, by an odd irony of fortune, a far more general and lasting success than any of the actual verses of that elegant writer. With regard to the comparative merits of Ford's version, which is in blank verse, and of Crashaw's, which is in rhyme, a confident opinion has generally been expressed in favour of the particular poet under consideration at the moment, nor is Lamb himself superior to this amiable partiality. He denies that Crashaw's version "can at all compare for harmony and grace with this blank verse of Ford's." But my own view coincides much rather with that of Mr. Swinburne, who says that "between the two beautiful versions of Strada's pretty fable by Ford and Crashaw there will always be a diversity of judgment among readers; some must naturally prefer the tender fluency and limpid sweetness of Ford, others the dazzling intricacy and affluence in refinements, the supple and cunning implication, the

choiceness and subtlety of Crashaw." It may be added that the only reference made by Crashaw in any part of his writings to any of the dramatists his contemporaries is found in a couplet addressed to Ford:—

Thou cheat'st us, Ford, mak'st one seem two by art;
What is *love's sacrifice* but the *broken heart*?

After "Music's Duel" the best known poem of Crashaw's is his "Wishes to his Supposed Mistress," a piece in forty-two stanzas, which Mr. Palgrave reduced to twenty-one in his *Golden Treasury*. He neglected to mention the "sweet theft," and accordingly most readers know the poem only as he reduced and rearranged it. The act was bold, perhaps, but I think that it was judicious. As Crashaw left it the poem extends beyond the limits of a lyric, tediously repeats its sentiments, and gains neither in force nor charm by its extreme length. In Mr. Palgrave's selection it challenges comparison with the loveliest and most original pieces of the century. It never, I think, rises to the thrilling tenderness which Donne is capable of on similar occasions. Crashaw never pants out a line and a half which leave us faint and throbbing, as if the heart of humanity itself had been revealed to us for a moment; with all his flying colour and lambent flame Crashaw is not Donne. But the *Wishes* is more than a charming, it is a fascinating poem, the pure dream of the visionary poet, who liked to reflect that he too might marry if he would, and choose a godly bride. He calls upon her—

Whoe'er she be,
That not impossible She
That shall command my heart and me;

Where'er she lie
Locked up from mortal eye
In shady leaves of destiny—

to receive the embassy of his wishes, bound to instruct her in that higher beauty of the spirit which his soul demands—

Something more than
Taffata or tissue can,
Or rampant feather, or rich fan.

But what he requires is not spiritual adornment alone; he will have her courteous and accomplished in the world's ways also, the possessor of

Sydneyan showers
Of sweet discourse, whose powers
Can crown old Winter's head with flowers;

and finally

Life, that dares send
A challenge to his end,
And when it comes say, "Welcome, friend."

I wish her store
Of worth may leave her poor
Of wishes; and I wish—no more.

The same refined and tender spirit animates the "Epitaph upon Husband and Wife, who died and were buried together." The lovely rambling verses of "To the Morning, in satisfaction for Sleep," are perhaps more in the early manner of Keats than any other English lines. In some of those sacred poems which we have lately been considering he reminds us no less vividly of Shelley, and there are not a few passages of Crashaw which it would require a very quick ear to distinguish from Mr. Swinburne. We may safely conjecture that the latter poet's "Song in Season" was written in deliberate rivalry of that song of Crashaw's which runs—

O deliver
 Love his quiver;
 From thine eyes he shoots his arrows,
 Where Apollo
 Cannot follow,
 Feathered with his mother's sparrows.

But perhaps the sweetest and most modern of all Crashaw's secular lyrics is that entitled "Love's Horoscope." The phraseology of the black art was never used with so sweet and picturesque an ingenuity, and the piece contains some of the most delicately musical cadences to be found in the poetry of the age:—

Thou know'st a face in whose each look
 Beauty lays ope Love's fortune-book,
 On whose fair revolutions wait
 The obsequious motions of Love's fate.
 Ah! my heart! her eyes and she
 Have taught thee new astrology.
 Howe'er Love's native hours were set,
 Whatever starry synod met,
 'Tis in the mercy of her eye
 If poor Love shall live or die.

It is probable from internal and from external evidence also that all these secular poems belong to Crashaw's early years at Cambridge. The pretty lines "On Two Green Apricocks sent to Cowley by Sir Crashaw" evidently date from 1633; the various elegies and poems of compliment can be traced to years ranging from 1631 to 1634. It is doubtful whether the "Wishes" themselves are at all later than this. Even regarding him as a finished poet ten years before the publication of his book, however, he comes late in the list of seventeenth-century lyricists, and has no claims to be considered as an innovator. He owed all the basis of his style, as has been already hinted, to Donne and to Ben Jonson. His originality was one of treatment and technique; he forged a more rapid and brilliant short line than any of his predecessors had done, and for brief intervals and along sudden paths of his own he carried English prosody to a higher refinement, a more glittering felicity, than it had ever achieved. Thus, in spite of his conceits and his romantic colouring, he points the way for Pope, who did not disdain to borrow

from him freely. It is unfortunate that Crashaw is so unequal as to be positively delusive; he baffles analysis by his uncertain hold upon style, and in spite of his charm and his genius is perhaps most interesting to us because of the faults he shares with purely modern poets. It would scarcely be unjust to say that Crashaw was the first real poet who allowed himself to use a splendid phrase when a simple one would have better expressed his meaning; and in an age when all but the best poetry was apt to be obscure, crabbed, and rugged, he introduces a new fault, that of being visionary and diffuse, with a deliberate intention not only, as the others did, to deck nature out in false ornament, but to represent her actual condition as being something more "starry" and "seraphical" than it really is. His style has hectic beauties that delight us, but evade us also, and colours that fade as promptly as the scarlet and the amber in a sunset sky. We can describe him best in negatives; he is not so warm and real as Herrick, nor so drily intellectual as the other hymnists, nor coldly and respectably virile like Cowley. To use an odd simile of Shelley's, he sells us gin when the other poets offer us legs of mutton, or at all events baskets of bread and vegetables.

After the birth of the future Duchess of Orleans in 1644, Queen Henrietta Maria fled to Paris, and held a kind of court there for the benefit of her husband's cause. The poet Cowley was her secretary, and seems to have introduced Crashaw to her. Tradition says that the younger poet found the elder in great poverty in Paris, and that his good offices with the Queen enabled him to secure for Crashaw one of the last fragments of preferment still clinging about exiled majesty. To a fellow Catholic Henrietta Maria could still offer an introduction to Roman society, and it is said that she gave the poet a letter to Cardinal J. B. Pallotta, then the Governor of Rome, a post to which he had been raised, in the flower of his age, by Pope Urban VIII. Pallotta was a man of force and ambition, feared as much as honoured for the extreme severity of his morals. His influence over Innocent X. was so considerable and so salutary that he was himself talked of as a possible successor to the tiara. This man, as Canon Bargrave recounts in his *Pope and College of Cardinals* in 1660, offered Crashaw the post of private secretary to himself, which the poet seems to have held for about two years. In the vivid pages of the close of *John Inglesant* the reader will find a very correct and stirring picture of the condition of the Holy City some six years after Crashaw's departure from it. He will easily realise, from that description, that although Rome had purged itself from its most crying scandals of a hundred years before, its society was far from being calculated to soothe or delight the soul of a chaste mystic, who had seen no ruder side of life than was to be found in the quiet hall of Peterhouse or the saintly society of Little Gidding. His soul burned within him because of the wickedness of the servants of the Cardinal, and at last, like Joseph, he felt constrained to bring their evil report to his father in God. We hear from Bargrave, who was in Rome at the

time, in common with all the exiled fellows of Peterhouse; that Pallotta took the hint and chastised his followers, whereupon they in revenge threatened to take Crashaw's life. The Cardinal, who came from Ancona, bethought him of the neighbouring sanctuary of Loreto, of which he was himself the patron, and on April 24, 1649, he procured for the poet a small benefice in the famous Basilica Church of our Lady.

We can imagine with what feelings of rapture and content the world-worn poet crossed the Apennines and passed down to the dry little town above the shores of the Adriatic, in which he doubtless pictured to himself a haunt of peace and prayer till his life's end. As he ascended the last hill, and saw before him the magnificent basilica which Bramante had built as a shelter for the Holy House, he would feel that his feet were indeed upon the threshold of his rest. With what joy, with what a rapturous and beating heart, he would long to see that very Santa Casa, the cottage built of brick, which angels lifted from Nazareth out of the black hands of the Saracen, and gently dropped among the nightingales in the forest of Loreto on that mystic night of the year 1294. There, like a child's bare body wrapped in the velvets and naperies of a princely cradle, the humble Casa lay in the marble enclosure which Sansovino had made for it, and there through the barbaric brickwork window in the Holy Chimney he could see, in a trance of wonder, the gilded head of Madonna's cedarn image that St. Luke the Evangelist had carved with his own hands. Here indeed a delicious life seemed planned for Crashaw—to minister all day in the rich incense; to touch the very raiment of Our Lady, stiff with pearls and rubies to the feet; to trim the golden lamps, the offerings of all the kings of the whole Catholic world; to pass in and out between the golden cherubim and brazen seraphim; to cleanse the mosaics of lapis-lazuli, and to polish the silver bas-reliefs till they shouted the story of the magic flight from Nazareth. There, in the very house of Jesus, to hear the noise and mutter of the officiating priest, the bustle of canons, chaplains, monks, and deacons, the shrill sweet voices of the acolytes singing all day long—this must have seemed the very end of life and beginning of heaven to the mystical and sensuous Crashaw. It appears, however, that his joys were brief. In August 1649, four months after his appointment, his benefice had passed into other hands, and we learn from Bargrave that he died a few weeks after he arrived at Loreto, not without suspicion of having been poisoned by those whom he had denounced to Cardinal Pallotta. He seems to have been in his thirty-seventh year. Cowley composed a lovely elegy for his funeral, promising him an immortality which he has in some sort achieved. He was a good man and a gentleman, an extreme instance of a remarkable type; and the only one of all the English divine poets of the century whose temperament drove them actually within the precincts of Rome.

EDMUND W. GOSSE.

Azenor.

"SEAMEN, seamen, tell me true,
Is there any of your crew
Who in Armor tower has seen
Azenor, the kneeling queen?"

"We have seen her oft indeed,
Kneeling in the selfsame place,
Brave her heart, though pale her face,
White her soul, though dark her weed."

I.

Of a long-past summer's day
Envoys came from far away,
Mailed in silver, clothed with gold,
On their snorting chargers bold.

When the warder spied them near,
To the King he went and cried,
"Twelve bold knights come pricking here,
Shall I open to them wide?"

"Let the great gates opened be,
See the knights are welcomed all;
Spread the board and deck the hall:
We will feast them royally."

"By our Prince's high command,
Who ere long shall be our King,
We come to ask a precious thing,
Azenor your daughter's hand."

"Gladly will we grant your prayer :
Brave the youth as we have heard ;
Tall is she, milkwhite and fair,
Gentle as a singing bird."

Fourteen days high feast they made,
Fourteen days of dance and song ;
Till the dawn the harpers played,
Mirth and joyance all day long.

"Now, my fair spouse, it is meet
That we turn us toward our home."

"As you will, my love, my sweet ;
Where you are, there I would come."

II.

When his stepdame saw the bride,
Well-nigh choked with spleen was she ;
"This pale-faced girl, this lump of pride—
And shall she be preferred to me ?

New things please men best, 'tis true,
And the old are cast aside.
Natheless, what is old and tried
Serves far better than the new."

Scarce eight months had passed away
When she to the Prince would come,
And with subtlety would say,
"Would you lose both wife and home ?

"Have a care, lest what I tell
Should befall you, so 'twere best ;
Have a care, and guard you well—
Ware the cuckoo in your nest "

"Madam, if the truth you tell,
Meet reward her crime shall earn ;
First the round tower's straitest cell,
Then in nine days she shall burn."

III.

When the old King was aware,
Bitter tears the dotard shed,
Tore in grief his white, white hair,
Crying, "Would God that I were dead."

And to all the seamen said,
"Good seamen, pray you tell me true,
Is there then any one of you
Can tell me if my child be dead?"

"My liege, as yet alive is she,
Though burned to-morrow shall she be;
But from her prison tower, O King!
Morning and eve we hear her sing.

Morning and eve from her fair throat
Issues the same sweet plaintive note,
'They are deceived; I kiss thy rod,
Have pity on them, O my God!'"

IV.

Even as a lamb, who gives his life
All meekly to the cruel knife,
White-robed she went, her soft feet bare,
Self-shrouded in her golden hair.

And as she to her dreadful fate
Fared on, poor innocent, meek and mild,
"Grave crime it were," cried small and great,
"To slay the mother and the child."

All wept sore, both small and great;
Only the stepdame smiling sate:
"Sure, 'twere no evil deed, but good
To kill the viper with her brood."

"Quick, good firemen, fan the fire,
Till it leap forth fierce and red;
Fan it fierce as my desire,
She shall burn till she is dead."

Vain their efforts, all in vain,
Though they fanned and fanned again;
The more they blew, the embers grey
Faded and sank and died away.

When the judge the portent saw
Dazed and sick with fear was he:
"She is a witch, she flouts the law;
Come let us drown her in the sea."

V.

What saw you on the sea? A boat
Neither by sail nor oarsman sped,
And at the helm, to watch it float,
An angel white with wings outspread.

A little boat far out to sea,
And with her child a fair ladye,
Whom at her breast she sheltered well,
Like a white dove upon a shell.

She kissed and clasped and kissed again
His little back, his little feet,
Crooning a soft and tender strain,
"Da-da my dear, Da-da my sweet.

"Ah, could your father see you, sweet,
A proud man would he be to-day;
But we on earth may never meet:
But he is lost and far away."

VI.

In Armor tower is such affright
As never castle knew before,
For at the midmost hour of night
The wicked stepdame is no more.

"I see hell open at my side,
Oh, save me, in God's name, my son;
Your spouse was chaste: 'twas I who lied;
Oh, save me, for I am undone."

Scarce had she checked her lying tongue
When from her lips a snake did glide
With threatening jaws, which hissed and stung
And pierced her marrow till she died.

Eftsoons, to foreign realms the knight
Went forth, by land and over sea;
Seeking in vain his lost delight
O'er all the round, round world went he.

He sought her East, he sought her West,
Next to the hot South sped he forth,
Then, after many a fruitless quest,
He sought her in the gusty North.

There by some nameless island vast
His anchor o'er the side he cast;
When by a brooklet's fairy spray,
He spies a little lad at play.

Fair are his locks, and blue his eyes,
As his lost love's or as the sea;
The good knight, looking on them, sighs,
"Fair child, who may thy father be?"

"Sir, I have none save Him in heaven:
Long years ago he went away,
Ere I was born, and I am seven;
My mother mourns him night and day."

"Who is thy mother, child, and where?"
"She cleanses linen white and fair
In yon clear stream." "Come, child, and we
Together will thy mother see."

He took the youngling by the hand,
And as they paced the yellow strand
The child's swift blood in pulse and arm
Leapt to his father's and grew warm.

"Rise up and look, oh, mother dear ;
It is my father who is here :
My father who was lost is come—
Oh, bless God for it!—to his home."

They knelt and blessed His holy name,
Who is so good and just and mild,
Who joins the sire and wife and child:
And so to Brittany they came.

And may the blessed Trinity
Protect all toilers on the sea.

LEWIS MORRIS.

A Study in Fool Literature.

THE "SHIP OF FOOLS."

OF all the literary products of man's scorn for man, the most finished and classical is the *Fool*. The rest betray the 'prentice hand; he is a masterpiece. The figures of the "dolt" or the "blockhead," for instance, are formless shadows, without distinct colour or characteristic bearing; that of the "dunce" has one feature clearly drawn—his pointed cap—and the rest vague; the Fool alone is completely imagined, vividly drawn, and charged at every point with ridiculous expression. The cap and ass-ears trimmed with bells, the short coat, the leather club, the bagpipe which he prefers to harp or lyre, the dull eye, the wide smirking mouth, the retreating chin—all these features make up a vivid and unique figure, which none of us ever saw, but which, if we met him, we should all involuntarily greet as an old friend.

It might be supposed that a figure so distinct would have a rigorously limited application. On the contrary, however, his very piquancy made him a favourite instrument with satirists who lashed vice with an eye to literary effect; and he was used with indiscriminate partiality to label a host of errors with which he was only remotely concerned, just as children defy nature by painting a whole landscape in their favourite red or blue. Or, again, the same thing would happen in quite a different way. When a man with a quick eye fixes his attention on some mental trait, and sets himself to observe every shade and form in which it exists, he is pretty sure to hit upon analogies which the crude psychology of popular language has missed. Thackeray pursued the notion of "snobbishness" so far, that the detection of an almost impalpable grain of the quality sufficed to write a man down a snob. And the "Dulness," which Pope celebrates in the *Dunciad*, becomes in the last book so abnormally expanded that it can include even a Bentley and a Bolingbroke. Partly through over-close observation of this kind, partly through the loose usage of excited controversy, the term Fool obtained in the sixteenth century an extraordinary currency; and a whole group of writers is extant who used it (in logical language) with the utmost degree both of extension and of comprehension. Nearly all men, we find, are "fools," and nearly the whole gamut of faults and vices are implied in "folly." This literature of Fools is one of the most curious chapters of literary history, and, we can assure the reader, by no means without its amusing side. He must follow us, however, into scenery very unlike that of modern satire. He must leave

the elegant frivolities of Pope's "Twit'nam," and the refined fopperies of La Bruyère's Paris, the aristocracy of wit and the aristocracy of birth, and jostle the stout burghers of a mediæval German town, in their narrow, crooked streets, gloomy with the shadow of jutting gables and oriels.

The vogue was first established by the epoch-making *Narrenschiff* (1494) of Sebastian Brandt; and writers of all classes and opinions followed his lead. The impressive preacher, Geiler of Keisersberg, made each of Brandt's Fools the theme of a sermon; the impatient Bohemian Murner surpassed Brandt on his own ground, and produced in his *Narrenbeschwörung* (1512) and *Der grosse lutherische Narr* (1522), among the most inventive works of Fool literature; Pamphilus Gengenbach answered the attack on Luther with the equally effective *Novella*, in which Murner is swallowed by the "Great Lutheran Fool," whom he had vainly tried to exorcise. In the camp of Humanism, meantime, the *Ship of Fools* helped to evoke the most famous book of the time, Erasmus's *Praise of Folly* (1509); and another scarcely less famous, the *Epistolæ Obscurorum Virorum* (1515-17), though not precisely a part of Fool literature, belongs to it in tendency, and shows its influence in details. And finally, to pass over minor efforts, honest Hans Sachs devoted a good many of those Sabbath leisure hours of his to further working the same fruitful mine; and under his patient, genial touch, Fool literature, which had been steeped in all the venom of theological controversy, returned to the calmer region of social satire.

The *Ship of Fools* and the *Praise of Folly* stand at the two poles of Fool literature. The one is its most naïve, the other its most artificial, product. Erasmus's book is incomparably superior in learning, wit, and intellectual resource; but it is less sincere, consistent, and fervent than Brandt's sober rhymes. The *Praise of Folly* is the most brilliant work of German Humanism, a collection of the best things which had ever been said about Folly, woven into a continuous tissue, with the utmost rhetorical skill and the finest sense of congruity; the *Ship of Fools* is rather a growth than a creation—the outcome of mediæval wisdom flung, at the last moment of the middle ages, upon the dawning consciousness of modern times; and its materials, artlessly assembled like the items in a catalogue, betray an utter indifference to effective grouping. Brandt's work is like a bed of wild flowers, with their homely smell and sober colours; Erasmus's like a wreath woven of the most dainty and piquant exotics. And while the less pretending has at least the harmony of monotony, the more brilliant is marred by occasional lapses in its essential irony, attacking in earnest where it should defend in sport, and becoming at different times a *jeu d'esprit*, a diatribe, and a sermon. But both men, after all, are Teutons; and we shall seize the final note of Brandt's life and work better if we bring his shy and modest learning face to face with the blatant Humanism of Italy. Sandro Botticelli has a fascinating portrait* of one who, as

* In the Berlin Museum.

Pope, showed no love of Humanism, but who came of a great Humanist stock—Giuliano de' Medici, son of Lorenzo, and brother of Leo X.; and one sees his ancestry in the fastidious nostril, the haughty lip, the imperious but not indomitable chin, the ingenious rather than meditative forehead: an embodiment of enterprise, audacity, and defiance. Of Sebastian Brandt, too, we have a portrait. He is taken in his doctor's robes. Under the sober baretus, which covers the whole head from brow to neck, gleams a face somewhat pale and worn, yet not oppressively so, and bent a little downward, yet without any suggestion of abstraction. The eye is staid, melancholy, observant; the mouth refined, cautious, and not without a shade of pain; the nose sharp and sinuous; the forehead firm and strong. It is the face of a man whose strength and weakness lie in quiet moderation.

I.

The son of an innkeeper in Strassburg, Sebastian Brandt was born there in 1458. His father died while he was still young, and, it would seem, left his mother poor. For, instead of being sent to the great public school in the neighbouring Alsatian town of Schlettstadt, which attracted scholars from far and near—among them nearly all the other Strassburg Humanists—Brandt attended certain "elementary schools kept by private teachers." Here he learned to write Latin verses with more facility than elegance; and here he learned to love his life-long favourite, the pious and gentle magician Vergil. It was an epoch in his life when from this provincial air, from the widowed household and the obscure teachers, young Sebastian entered, at seventeen, what was at this moment the focus of the intellectual vigour of Germany, the arena of its fiercest conflicts, and the nurse of most that was to be brilliant in the next generation—the university of Basel. Here Reuchlin was preparing to be, with Erasmus, one of the "two eyes" of Germany. Here was the genial and highborn Johann von Dalberg, afterwards, as Bishop of Worms, to adorn the choice Humanist circle which Philip of the Pfalz gathered round him in Heidelberg castle; Rudolph Agricola, too, another ornament of the same court, of whom Erasmus said that he might have been the first man in Italy if he had not loved Germany better, and who might have been, still more unequivocally than he was, the first of German Humanists if his fine accomplishments had not been accompanied by a fastidious distaste for the trouble of communicating them. A little apart from this Humanist group was a little band of Alsations distinguished rather by fervour than by lucidity, in whom the genius of Humanism half accepted or irresolutely repelled the embrace of its deadly scholastic enemy. Chief among these are two life-long friends of Brandt—Jacob Wimpheling, the most audacious of literary patriots, and the fiery coryphæus of the Strassburg Humanists, who dealt the first heavy blow at the mediæval barbarism of the schools, and then, when

age had revived the old Adam in him, soiled his laurels by a passionate assault upon the pagan poets ; and Johann Geiler of Keisersberg, the last great preacher before the Reformation, who attracted multitudes with sermons as homely and vivid as Bunyan in spite of all the scholastic elaboration of their plan, and made the Strassburg minster classic ground before Goethe. There, too, was Tritheim, the laborious historian of Germany, who was to cultivate Humanism in the place of all others least accessible to it—an abbot's chair—making his abbey of Sforzheim a hostelry for scholars ; until at length the Obscure powers, incensed at such an anomaly, drove him out to seek a calmer resting-place at Würzburg.

To be without speculative curiosity is no doubt to avoid one great source of mental revolutions, and men who begin with no more abstract faith than that the world is full of evil commonly carry it consistently to their graves. The life of Brandt, at any rate, who held this faith if ever man did, has a continuity rarely found in celebrated lives. His way is of an even tenor, without turning-points, almost without turnings. He is changed neither by obscurity nor by fame ; he can be poor without bitterness, prosperous without pride. He keeps his simple creed unaltered by controversy or by persuasion. Half a century of momentous national life leaves him nearly where it found him ; the youth who came to Basel in 1477 is something more than a father to the man who died at Strassburg in 1521 : if one listens, one hears only a repetition—the same solemn wielding of the same moral lash, the same homely verses and the same false quantities. At the beginning one would think of him, but for his Mariolatry, as an early reformer ; and when the Reformation comes he preserves his middle station, neither joining it, nor like Erasmus, Reuchlin, and so many others, receding the more the further it advanced. This is not the spurious consistency of one too proud to change his course, for no man was more inveterately modest than our Sebastian. But his very modesty heightened his natural inaccessibility to strange influences. Without either speculative intellect or restless ambition, he never struggled to escape from the charmed circle of his thoughts, the master principle of which was not understanding, nor imagination, but a hungry and imperious moral fervour, which reduced both to its service. Ingenious subtleties of the schools and airy fancies of the poets alike asked vainly for lodging within a mind which required of all its inmates the passport of ethical emotion.

It was natural, therefore, that Brandt, who had entered in the philosophic faculty, did not remain there ; and that he chose instead one of the two professions congenial to a man of his earnest and didactic disposition—theology and law. He passed into the latter faculty during his third year, became licentiate in the canon law in 1484, and then taking up the civil law became in 1489 graduate in both—*doctor utriusque legis*. He lectured, published legal treatises, and served repeatedly as dean of the faculty. He might even be called a successful lawyer ; though the phrase is somewhat inadequate to describe a man so

unworldly, so devoid of mere bustling activity, so impatient of the moral neutrality which may lurk behind the indignant phrases of the courts, so impervious to the suspicion that laws were perhaps invented for the sake of lawyers. Law, too, was only a part of his activity. He was an energetic Humanist; and in those early days of the printing-press, a Humanist had no more important function than to multiply the classics by its means. The famous press of Aldus, at Venice, was emulated by that—scarcely less famous—established here by Bergmann von Olpe, which did for the Basel of Brandt what that of Froben, a generation later, did for the Basel of Erasmus. Brandt was the editor-in-chief; and under his supervision, classics and theologians, poets and jurists, heathen fabulists and fathers of the Church were impressed with that motto of Bergmann—*Nil sine causa*, which symbolises the self-reliance of the Humanists, as Aldus's *Festina lente* their methodic industry. Original poems too, Latin as well as German, issued from Brandt's busy pen; though his muse, if he had one, was certainly no classic damsel, but some pious, true-hearted Teutonic maiden. There are devout addresses to the Virgin, which read as if they came rather from a monk at his shrine than from a lawyer at his desk; and glowing odes to Kaiser Max, the favourite of his unruly subjects, the genial type of a chivalry which was dying, and which all his boyish devotion, his tournaments, and his romances could not revive.

The German poems have less elaboration of style; they are less literary; they are even less ambitious. And they have a distinct sphere. Brandt's mind, which hardly admitted of low tones of feeling, was divided somewhat sharply into the two regions of his scorns and his admirations—his attitude towards the man of men, who were "fools," and towards the exceptional "wise." Speaking roughly, his Latin poems are odes, epistles, descriptions referring to the latter—to Geiler, A Lapide, Max, the saints and the Virgin; while the German poems are a mass of stern precepts designed to lead the host of infatuated wanderers into the right way. They are culled partly from ancients such as Solomon and Dionysius Cato; partly from the voluminous German moralists who had already gathered in the same field, from Vridanc, Albrecht v. Eyt, Hugo v. Trimberg. In dignity and generality they range from the Commandments down to minute injunctions not to stuff the mouth or gaze on the food. With few additions of his own, Brandt rearranges these useful directions in the dialect of his own day and his own district. There is no attempt at ingenious style, no frippery of many metres. His unvaried measure is a homely octosyllabic couplet, the degenerate offspring of the beautiful measures of Wolfram and Walther; a measure without subtle movement or airy grace, offending alternately by hard regularity and by harsh licence, but serviceable enough as a medium for thoughts which, in a metre of any lyric suggestiveness, would have seemed as incongruous as words by Poor Richard set to music by Schubert. Moreover, his didactic aim made elegance of metre superfluous. What he needed was a line

not too long for a plain understanding, and a recurrent beat of rhyme to assist an unpractised memory.

The culmination of these collections was reached in the *Ship of Fools*, which, despite the allegory suggested by the title but rapidly forgotten in the book, is simply a series of invectives against 112 species of folly, in which the vast treasure of rules and precepts, saws and instances, proverbs and fables, gathered in a generation of moralising, is concentrated. Published in 1494 at Olpe's press, it at once became the classic of a didactic age. Its paper was scarcely dry when a Strassburg publisher paid it the compliment of pirating it with numerous interpolations; and the Strassburg preacher, Geiler, that of making its chapters (in the pirated edition) the text of a series of discourses. Abroad, too, it made rapid progress. An unknown hand translated it at an unknown date into Platt-Deutsch. In 1497 Jacob Locher, a pupil of Brandt's who was one day to assail his master's half-medieval faith from the camp of pure Humanism, translated it into tolerable Latin hexameters. This put it within reach of all Europe. Two French versions (by Rivière and Droyn) immediately followed; and, twelve years after, the worthy Gloucestershire priest, Alexander Barclay, rendered its pithy phrases into elephantine stanzas of English rhyme-royal, with much solemn head-shaking at the evil of the times. In the same year (1509) another Englishman, Watson, translated it from the French version (J. Droyn) into English prose. In Germany the original itself was reprinted countless times during this same sixteenth century, which yielded neither to Reformer nor to Humanist its partiality for the homely pungent burgher-literature of which the *Ship of Fools* is a classic example.

II.

While Brandt was still a university student he received one day an anonymous letter, in which, with much superfluous insolence, and in a barbarous style, he was bidden write no more of his rough verses. He replied. The first part of his answer is what any one who condescended to notice such an attack at all might naturally write—conclusive refutation, sharp criticism in return, with a spice of obloquy. But the end is unique. He turns round to seriously exhort his assailant to give up his calumnious practices, and to let him know when he has done so; for then, he proceeds (to the man whom he has just called a "fanatical beast"), "thou wilt find me not only thy friend, but thy best of friends. If thou but knewest me, thou wouldst wish to be my friend! In the meantime enjoy the health which thou grudgest thy Sebastian." Thy Sebastian! The temper which Brandt showed at twenty-two he retained through life; and his famous work, the *Narrenschiff*, is distinguished by a decisive mark from such satires as the *Dunciad* or *Gulliver*. Its elaborate exposition of vices does not aim chiefly to expose, but to convert. Brandt's indignation at folly has no touch of the tragic

cynicism of Swift, or of the personal exasperation of Pope. The giant at bay against the world, the man of letters pouring venom upon a crowd of petty assailants, have nothing in common with the prosperous and honoured doctor of both laws, who wields his pen less as a keen weapon than as a useful instrument. Of the Roman poets his favourite is not among the satirists; neither Horace nor Juvenal attracts him so much as Vergil. He conceives his book as a "mirror" (*Speculum*, *Spiegel*), in which every class of men may see themselves as they are; and it is part of his *naïveté* to suppose that they have only to be shown their faults to correct them. He was one of those honest souls who felt a pang of disappointment that in spite of the rapid diffusion of Bibles since the invention of printing, men could still err. "All lands are full of Holy Writ," are his opening words; . . . "yet is all Scripture despised; the whole world lives in dark night, blindly persisting in its sins; every street and alley teems with fools. . . For there is no man that lacks nought, or who dares truly say that he is wise and not a fool." His book was in fact a task of patriotic duty, full of conscientious reading and steady labour, accesses of inspiration, and altogether smelling more of oil than of wine. Like Lucretius, he often spent the night hours in making the verses which were to save the world; and he reflects with pity how little his light-hearted Fools dream of the patient man who is crucifying them at his desk. "I have watched by night while they are asleep, or drinking, or gaming, and thinking little of me; or driving over the frozen snow, or sitting at home, reckoning up to-day's losses and planning to-morrow's lies: 'tis no wonder if I who must ponder all their follies, do watch when no man trows, to make my book worthy."

Most of the chapters, indeed, are rather treatises on folly than pictures of fools. Brandt's earnestness is too simple to maintain for long the indirectness of irony; and he rapidly falls into the more congenial method of invective. He sets his victim before him like a confessed culprit, allows him neither witnesses nor counsel, nor even to open his lips in his own defence; and then the slow, unerring finger of reproachful scorn is pointed at him, the solemn catalogue of his errors is proclaimed, and the wise and foolish of old troop along with heavy mechanic pace, a voice of pathetic indignation crying out at every turn: "O grosser dor, merk zuo und hör! O armer narr, wie bist so blint!"

But what did Brandt mean by calling his work the "*Ship*" of Fools? For, in fact, if about a score of lines were cut out, the acutest reader might go through it from beginning to end without a suspicion of nautical flavour. The "*Ship*" is a phantom ship, momentarily seen and instantly lost sight of. It has no secure existence in the mind either of reader or of writer. Sometimes we hear of a ship, sometimes of a fleet of ships; of its destination we hear only the name, "*Narragonia*," which we are at liberty to interpret, at pleasure, the "*Fool's Paradise*" or the "*Fool's Hell*." The indifference to purely imaginative effects which

we have noticed in Brandt's life pervades the whole structure of the *Narrenschiff*. The "Ship" is no organic part of the work; it is rather a shrivelled rudiment, which has survived the disappearance of its function. It is a survival of more fertile imaginations than Brandt's; the relic of a poetical tradition which associated the sea in a peculiar manner with Fools.

One germ of this association lay doubtless in the dread of the sea. To the inland dweller the sea abounded with perils, natural and supernatural, and the ship was a mode of tempting them upon which a wise man would not, if he could help it, set his foot. A naïve reading of the classics would bring to light several examples of "Ships of Fools." There was the expedition of Xerxes himself, with his colossal confidence and his colossal disasters, a stock hero in Fool literature; there were the Argonauts and the companions of Odysseus, drifting from coast to coast, from misfortune to misfortune, facile as children in running into error, and often amending it only with the children's remedy of tears.

The idea of a voyage of Fools is, no doubt, vaguely foreshadowed in such legends, and must have drawn new vigour from them when the Renaissance made them known. But far back in the Middle Ages there is evidence of a kindred conception in a form of unmistakable meaning. We speak habitually of persons suffering mental confusion, through drink or otherwise, as "at sea." By a similar inspiration, popular wit delighted to imagine the light-hearted revellers of the day collected in a ship, serenely unconscious of danger, heedless of helm or sail, shouting songs while the storm roars, and chinking glasses while the waves break over them. It seemed a piquant way of ridiculing careless security to represent it in a situation where it would inevitably go to the bottom. Thus, a Netherlandish poem, the *Blauwe Schute* (first adduced by Zarneke), opens with an invitation to all "ghesellen van wilde manieren" to come into the "blue ship." It is only a variation of the same notion when the ship is conceived as bearing the revellers to condign punishment after they have rioted all their substance away. Heinrich Teichner's *Schif der Flust (Verlust)*, of the thirteenth century (first adduced by Docen), describes such a crew of beggared spendthrifts, who are borne from Linz, down the Danube, to regions of sparer, plainer living—to the towns of Narrowmouth and Hollowcheek, both naturally in the kingdom of Hungary. Perhaps a distant reflection of the notion may be found even in the famous *Wiener Meerfahrt*, another thirteenth century poem, by the Viennese Enenkel, in which a number of pilgrims, planning their journey in a tavern, persuade themselves, as the drink does its work, that they are already on ship-board. All these, however, are two centuries earlier than Brandt's poem; and it is not certain that he knew them. The clearest light was thrown upon the subject by another discovery of Zarneke's, the *Monopolium des Liechtschiffs*. This was one of the mock academical orations which, in German university life, held the place of the mock trials practised among the law students of Paris. It

was delivered at Heidelberg between 1480 and 1490; and the president on the occasion was Brandt's friend, Wimpheling. Its conception was exactly that of Teichner's poem, the *Liechttschiff* being a receptacle for those who, by "eating and drinking, carelessness, idleness, and sleep," had been "lightened" of the oppressive burden of their former wealth and honour—impoverished princes, ecclesiastics ruined by hunting preferment in incorruptible Rome, alchemists who have lost their good metal by trying to make gold of it, and a score of others.

A few years afterwards the student's *jeu d'esprit* was taken up by the grave doctor of Basel; its irony became grim earnest, its nautical machinery a shadow in the background, and the homogeneous crew of ruined spendthrifts a motley army of "Fools," among whom every variety of sinner would find his like. Such was presumably the origin of the *Narrenschiff*. Brandt's innovation lay in inviting the whole society of the infatuated into the vessel originally prepared for a small detachment of them; and though the vessel in the process became, as we have said, a phantom, the innovation nevertheless took. He extended the "monopoly" from the wasted prodigal to such very distant kinsmen of his as the miser and the would-be legatee, the usurer and the quack, the bad workman and the ambitious peasant, the adulterer and the sacrileger, the self-complacent and the over-sanguine—in a word, to all who offended against the simplicity, thoroughness, and modesty which were cardinal virtues with Brandt.

Clearly, so liberal a construction of the term "Fool" was likely to lead to some anomalies; and there are many less fascinating tasks than to wander through the quaint chapters of the *Narrenschiff*, with their quainter woodcuts, endeavouring to grasp the essence of this Protean "folly." At every step, moreover, we stumble upon fragments of old usage and old fancy; for Brandt is both a child and a learned child of his time, brimful of German nature and of German thought.

One is not surprised, in the first place, to find him, genuine townsman as he is, terribly severe with offenders against the democratic virtue of self-regard. "He is a wise man who knows his own business and no man else's." To ignore and despise the mass of men is the beginning of wisdom. "Whoever would satisfy all the wants of mankind must indeed rise early and rarely go to rest." "It takes a great store of meal to stop everybody's mouth." A casual reader taking up Brandt's chapter headed on "Forgetting Oneself" anticipates a tirade against selfishness. Nothing of the kind. He reads, on the contrary, that a man is a "fool" who runs to put out the fire in another man's house when his own is burning, or even he who pushes another's boat forward with a loss of speed to his own. "The father who gives his children bread when he is starving should be flogged to death." An attack upon the monks, who seek their own salvation by a selfish withdrawal from the world, is answered by the plea that every man must think of his own soul first. "If I had two souls," he says, with unconscious humour, "I would gladly devote

one of them to my fellows; but having only one, I must care for it." Nothing, again, is more piquant than Brandt's perfectly serious treatment of ingratitude as a lively sense of favours to come. "The willing horse soon stops if you don't feed him; the full cistern is soon dry if you don't fill it; and the generous friend soon ceases to be generous if you don't repay his gifts." All this, however remote it might be from Christian self-denial, had many analogues in the ethics of Greece. But ancient life, too, had its imaginative and enthusiastic side; and one opens Brandt's chapter on "Friendship" with a faint hope that we shall now escape from the calculating prudence of the town, and be led, like Phædrus, out of its gates to the shade of a plane-tree beside some Northern Ilyssus. But our good Baseler makes no attempt to play the Socratic part. It is true that he laments the lack of "true friendship," and denounces the associations for mutual service which passed under its name. "Wo gelt gbrist" (is lacking), "do ist fründtschaft uss," he mourns. But even "true friendship" is for him a matter mainly of active hands and generous purses; a disinterested exchange of benefits as hollow friendship is a selfish exchange of them. It lay a little beyond the horizon of the fifteenth century to conceive friendship primarily as an enthusiastic relation between two minds, in which all outward service, however disinterested, has only a remote and, as it were, suburban function.

In one of his graphic renderings of old legends, Brandt has given a characteristic turn to the story of Marsyas and Apollo. The ungainly, bearded man who represents the "unhappy Faun," is being flayed upon a stretcher; the executioners are going jauntily to work—one sharpening his knife; the other, with a smirk of artistic appreciation of his own skill, carving the limbs. A little crowd of townspeople look on with open-mouthed compassion or curiosity. The Faun who ventured to struggle with a god, is the type, for Brandt, of all who attempt what is too hard for them. Let no one look for sympathy with heroism in his stern pages. Nature is to him a merciless Apollo, and man a feeble Marsyas, who, if he dares to struggle with her, well deserves the fate he is pretty sure to meet. The littleness of man is at the bottom of Brandt's philosophy; no name is too mean for him; even the fool is humbled by being reminded that he is a man,—in other words, clay and ashes, earth, dung,—the scum and the dregs of rational beings. "Happy is he who hath a terror, where'er he goes." This is the real source of Brandt's sharp condemnation of all flighty altruism. His self-regard is neither that of the proud man who despises his neighbours too much to care for them, nor of the Epicurean who dreads the pains of self-denial. It is primarily that of one who feels all interference with others to be a kind of presumption. The man who runs to put out his neighbour's fire when his own house is blazing, is reaching out of his province. The starving father who feeds his children, is reaching out of his province. The hero who ventures his life may do so with full conviction that he will lose it;

he may be absolutely without false hope, or unfounded self-confidence; none the less, in Brandt's view, is he playing the part of a presumptuous man—he is reaching out of his province. No doubt the action is made more "foolish" by the unpleasant consequences; the altruistic fireman is more of a "fool" because his own house is burnt, and the starving father because he dies. Still, it is the "presumption," not the imprudence, of the act which stirs the core of Brandt's contempt.

It is, however, when the illusions of complacency are added to the acts of presumption that Brandt pours out the full vials of his scorn. Pride, "which thrust the highest angel out of heaven and the first man out of Paradise," is in a hundred forms the mark of the Brandtian Fool. A girl, for instance, is complacently regarding her face in a mirror. At her feet lies a gridiron—not, as one at first imagines, the instrument of her neglected culinary duties, but that upon which she will herself, under other circumstances, play a leading and a terrible part. And we are sternly reminded of the Emperor Otto, "who took his mirror into battle, and shaved his two cheeks every day, and washed them with asses' milk." (What would Brandt have made of the ascetics of Aldershot?) A whole group of chapters lashes the Fools of social ambition; familiar types of all ages, like Ritter Peter* and Dr. Griff—honest citizens who have won their paper titles by backstairs influence; peasants who dress in slashed silk, gold chains, and Mechlin lace; artisans' wives who spend all they have in rings and dresses and bring their husbands to beggary. There is the kindred ambition of sightseeing: the fashionable Fools who travel and return no wiser than they went, according to the domestic-minded proverb which declares that "a goose flies away and a gander flies back," and the students who throng the foreign universities—Paris, Orleans, Bologna, Pavia—with more gain in folly than in learning; a cry heartily echoed by the translator Barclay, and after him in more classical prose by Ascham. The possibility of gaining wisdom by travel Brandt did not indeed wholly deny; but it was confined for the most part to wise heathens like Ulysses and Pythagoras; and a more sincere homage is paid to Socrates, who made Athens the bound of his feet as well as of his speculation. The kernel of Brandt's nature is uttered in the suspicion that "he who wanders cannot perfectly serve God." At other times he thinks rather of the perils of travel than of its futility. A wise man should stay at home, or, if by chance he find himself at sea, make for the shore as swiftly as may be. The Eldorado is far off, and you are more likely to be drowned than to reach it. Such is the deliberate view of a learned German doctor in one of the most noted cities of Europe, just two years after the discovery of America. Certainly, of adventure, of curiosity, of effort of every kind to be more than you are, Brandt is the coldest of preachers.

* A coat of arms is provided for the Ritter: a hawk of a heron's colour, and a cock sitting on a nest of eggs. Goedeke in his edition (p. 149) calls this "obscure," but its application to the knight's effeminate cowardice is surely obvious.

Vanity, ambition, and adventure, however, are pardonable offences compared with the incorrigible optimism of the born Fool—his happy faith that he is a favourite of gods and men, and that all that he doeth will prosper. It is in denouncing this to him peculiarly irritating complacency, that Brandt gives us the most interesting glimpses of his view of the world's constitution and government; a view no more purely Christian than his ethics are purely Christian, but mingled with the confused and faded paganism of the middle ages.

No faith could be more congenial to the gloomy, not to say morose, temperament of Brandt than that to which every religion has in its own way given a meaning—the uncertain tenure of happiness. The Greek would call no man happy till he died, and with his usual calm cynicism declared that the gods cut off the prosperous through envy. The Christian, vividly conscious of the perils of prosperity, saw in its sudden termination a loving chastisement. The Roman, more unimaginatively, held to the bare fact of change, and covered his ignorance of its reason by inventing a goddess of unreasoning change. Yet Fors Fortuna was but an abstraction while she remained a faith; and when she became a distinctly imagined figure, it was at the hands of poets to whom she was nothing more. It was reserved for the Middle Ages to develop the cult of Fortuna to its highest terms, with the help of the kindred Teutonic goddess, Frau Sælde. Standing on her wheel or driving it along, or supporting herself on a ball, she became a stock personage of the Middle High German poets. She was carved in the arcades and inlaid in the mosaics of cathedrals. She and her symbols entered into the very heart of mediæval thought. Theologians identified her wheel with the globe of the wicked world; poets with that of the changing moon, which thenceforth became the symbol of what the Germans still call *Laune* or *lunar caprice*.* In the fifteenth century the attempt to rationalise the conception of Fortune becomes noticeable among thoughtful minds. Her artless movements are subjected to more responsible guidance; sometimes they become divine; sometimes by a curious freak of Humanism the symbol of incalculable fluctuation is put in the hands of the determined and unalterable Fates. Brandt, in whose mind everything moral was written in brass, and everything imaginative in water, exhibits not only these two but several other conceptions of the wheel. He holds his doctrine with the tenacity of a vice, but the supernatural mechanism which supports it takes Protean shapes in his fluid imagination. Sometimes the wheel is still moved by Fortune. A rope tied to a crank draws it forward by an invisible hand, and the three Fools who are bound upon it successively mount and descend. In another chapter (56) God is its mover, and its course can be checked by prayer—obviously to the destruction of its fortuitous character. "Ye mighty ones," says the poet to the rulers of the world, "ye sit to the fore on Fortune's wheel. Be wise and consider the end, lest God turn round the wheel for you!" Or, again, when the

* Cf. Wackernagel in *Haupt's Zeitschr.* vi.

classical fit is on, Klotho takes the place of Fortune. By a still stranger confusion the wheel of Ixion and the stone of Sisyphus are pressed into the service of Fortune, merely because they revolve, like her wheel, in monotonous cycles of relief and misery. Gloomy imagery, no doubt; but how characteristic of the pessimist Brandt to illustrate the daily course of the world from the routine of Hell, and to find an analogue of human happiness in the "Fool" Sisyphus's moment of rest without hope at the hill-top! Shelley, who had moods of ecstasy rather than a joyous temperament, thought "this world's delight" like lightning—"brief, even as bright." Brandt would hardly have allowed its brightness.

The Fool who thinks he will always be happy is matched by him who thinks, or acts as if he thought, that he will never die. Brandt here enters a field already occupied by popular humour in the "Dance of Death"; but he added a new figure to the immortal series—that of "Death's Fool." In the *Narrenschiff*, as in Holbein's engraving, the Fool is represented springing aside to deal his enemy a blow with his club; but the skeleton has caught his cloak and holds him fast.* Even when the rest of the Dance was no longer performed, the episode of the Fool was retained; and in England must have been still familiar at the beginning of the seventeenth century, since Isabella draws a striking appeal from it in her argument with Claudio. "Reason thus," she urges with Life: . . .

Merely thou art *Death's Fool*;
For him thou labour'st by thy flight to shun,
And yet run'st towards him still.

A special class of Death's Fools are the expecters of legacies, otherwise immortalised in satire. It is Brandt's vein to think that unworthy expectations are likely to be frustrated; and he applies to these cases the piquant German proverb, which still survives: "Those thou thinkest to bear to the grave shall knock down nuts with thy shin bone;" for which Barclay substitutes the not inferior English version according to which they will feed their geese on the grass of his grave.

But the suggestiveness of the Fool's complacency was far from being exhausted here. It was piquant no doubt to represent him in the clutches of the death or the misfortune he despised; but after all it remained to show him in the days of his oblivious prosperity, revelling at ease in happy heedlessness of the morrow. For this, too, popular satire had found a classical expression; and besides the *Fools of Fortune* and the *Fool of Death*, a great host was assembled in the *Land of Cockayne*. This *Schlauraffenland* (or "Lazy-ape-country") as the Germans call it, was of course emphatically a land for the lazy. Labour was there not merely useless but hurtful; the servant with the easiest tasks had the largest wage, which was at once advanced if he gave them up. Heaven itself rewarded the idle by raining roasted pigeons into

* Cf. Woltmann, *Holbein*.

their open mouths. One of the most charming of these Utopias is that which Goethe's Rhapsode describes to the crowd upon the strand of Venice, where the inn-guest is received with open arms by mine host, entertained the more lavishly the longer he stays, and soundly beaten when he violates the sacred hospitality of the place by asking for his bill.* One of the mock orations of Brandt's own day gives another variation of the theme,—the description of a society grounded on a too literal obedience to the command, "Take no thought for the morrow." The *Schweinezunft*,† or "Gild of Pigs," holding that a happy heart was usually found above a full stomach and below a careless head, devised regulations of this kind :—To live without rule, to drink wine measures without measure, to eat more on Sunday than could be digested in the week ; to be always in debt and take no bills in ; to gather no wood in summer, and when winter comes to buy only green wood, and, if it will not burn, on no account to use any other fuel but the straw from their beds ; and so forth.

Brandt, on his part, gives us no description of the *Schlauffenland* itself. His chapter is wholly filled with an account of the voyage towards it, an ingenious parody of that of Odysseus. The Fools of Cockayne wander helplessly along the seas, searching every port and every shore, but vainly, for none knows where to land ; a rout of gay fellows, profligates and courtiers, dreaming of an Eldorado, but heeding neither compass nor chart ; half crushed in the *Symplegades*, hardly escaping *Scylla* and *Charybdis* ; some lulled by the sirens to fatal sleep, others swallowed by the cyclops, and many more entertained by the cannibal *Læstrygonæ*,

Who ever for their daily meat
Naught but the flesh of Fools do eat,
And drink the blood of Fools for wine.

At last, broken by the waves, borne astray by the wind, despoiled of its crew, and bereft of all help and counsel, the ship of misfortune is swallowed up in a whirlpool. Every one will recognise in this description a Brandtian version of those drifting vessels of revellers in which we found the earliest type of the *Ship of Fools*. It is characteristic of his loose grasp of imagery that the relation of the ship of Cockayne to the Ship or Ships of Fools in general is barely indicated, and that it should have been even possible to suppose them to be identical. Brandt's literary sense, though that of a lawyer, was strangely obtuse to confusing equivocations ; and with the term "Ship" especially he plays fast and loose. At times it means no more than a "pack" or "crowd" of Fools ; at others it stands only a little less vaguely for a whole fleet of such ships ; at others again it is unmistakably the thing of sails and oars. The single chapter on the *Endkrist* uses the term in five different applications without a

* Goethe, *Epist.* i.

† Printed in Zarncke, *Die deutschen Universitäten im Mittelalter*.

word of warning. It is first as usual, the Ship of Fools; five lines further we hear suddenly of "the paper ship" of theological literature; somewhat further we find the servants of Antichrist in a ship; in the same moment we are told that "St. Peter's ship" is in straits; and finally comes Antichrist sitting "in the great ship" (as if it had been mentioned) and diffusing his evil doctrines. The term had in fact begun to haunt and dominate his pen; no sooner did he need a metaphor than the ready "Ship" slipped in to supply it; and his easy critical conscience raised no scruples.

In the Ship of Cockayne the Fools are riotous as well as heedless and hopeful. They combine the two chief objects of Brandt's satire. We have followed one branch—the Fools of delusive hope—through all its ramifications. The Fools of Riot were equally repugnant to his orderly, domestic nature, and he assigns them quite as much room in the Ship. It was a gross age. Its manners were rude, its language coarse, its hunger and thirst stupendous. The very influences which civilised in one way depraved in another. The vigour of character which was to produce the Reformation found vent in quarrels unparalleled for ferocity if not for bitterness. Humanism, which gave its devotees "wit" and "manners," was less serviceable to their "honesty;" while to the pious morality of the towns even their virtues of Humanism were an air of ungodliness. Chivalry was gone, and with it the civilising power—such as it was—of "honour;" all that remained of knighthood was the rough soldier who passed his days in plunder and his nights in riot. The Huttens and Busches who were presently to dispel this reproach were still children. In no age, perhaps, out of their own, would Frank Hals or Jan Steen have felt so much at ease, or have painted with so little need of choice. One can fancy them sitting down to one of those inn-scenes described with such doleful humour by Erasmus,* and on his authority by Scott†—the big, comfortless *Gaststube*, dim with smoke and steam and breath, thronged with guests of all classes, men and women, sick and sound, astride on tables, or reeling over chairs, or propping ponderous frames on barrels, or washing in foul water, or pulling off boots besmirched to the knee with the deep mire of German roads, or whiling away the long hours till supper with that great leveller of mankind, the dice-box; staring open-mouthed if a well-dressed merchant comes in, but heedless of the sick peasant crouching in the corner. Or it is a group of good-livers round the table of a private house—one is smatching at the glasses and lifting them with ineffable satisfaction to his lips; another has taken up a huge joint of mutton and is privately gnawing it; others are sitting over their heavily spiced wine, and mouth-ing out jests and anecdotes which can never be too coarse to please or too childish to amuse. So, too, there were special seasons of disorder. In the small hours of the night the streets would be thronged by a ribald

* Colloquia: *Diversoria*. † *Anne of Geierstein*.

rout, with many a priest and many a student among them, shouting and singing, and pulling the house-bells to make the girls look out of the windows. At carnival time the *Vastracht* 'prentices scoured through the town "as if hunting bees," extorting from every house the blackmail of Shrovetide honey-cake. Even the church is not exempt, and the prayers are often drowned by the rattling bells of hawks and the barking of dogs, both introduced by some sporting worshipper; and before quiet can be restored the hawks must be hooded and the dogs be turned out, and there is endless clatter of tongues and wooden shoes. All these varieties of unmannerly men are lashed by Brandt. He gives them at the same time a singular privilege. He invents a saint for them, who even bears their patronymic. This is the "new saint" Grobianus, to whom, if we are to take Brandt at his word, all his contemporaries did homage; at any rate the new saint's claims were eagerly taken up by future satirists, and all through the sixteenth century Grobianus was as emphatically the patron of the "*grobe Leute*," the unmannerly people, as St. Julian of travellers or "St. Loy" of nuns.

With the unmannerly Fools may be grouped the motley crowd of *impostors* and their dupes, the former being in Brandt's sense no less "Fools" than the latter. First comes the great army of sturdy and valiant beggars, who profited by the advance of wealth and the still vigorous faith in the duty of almsgiving. A few hundred yards from where the *Narrenschiff* was written, was a unique beggar-settlement, possessing its own constitution and rules, and a monopoly in Basel of what was no doubt a profitable trade.* A regular apprenticeship was served, in which the active youth learnt to crouch and limp, the task being sometimes facilitated by breaking a leg. Mothers mourned when they brought forth healthy children; while a child with an incurable disease, if it could only be kept alive, was a joy to the household it did not a little to support. Troops of them would throng the entrance of a town, exposing their sores to all who passed in and out; and an amusing story is told how a benevolent but simple-minded nobleman, anxious to end so much misery, one day ordered them all to be brought to his house and cured. No threat could have been more terrible; and when the messengers arrived, the beggars had vanished. It is suggestive of the temper of the time that Brandt couples with these rogues the beggar-monks, who for a full century had been a social pest; and the relic-mongers. With more effective satire than he always attains, he tells us how the mendicant friars go about with a bottomless bag, demanding alms to fill it; while their brethren attend every consecration, crying out the sacred contents of their wallets—the hay from the Bethlehem stable, and the bone of Balaam's ass, and the feather of St. Michael's wing. Brandt has in fact both the good sense and the imaginative temper which have saved many devout men from superstition. The same

* Cf. Zarncke, *Narrensch.* ad. loc.

powers decide him against some faiths which the learned had not yet unanimously condemned—the love of astrology and the medicine of old wives. In condemning another doomed but not yet effete superstition he had at least all the Humanist camp on his side; scholasticism being, like the aged lion in the fable, the mark at which hardly a single young scholar failed at one time or other to have his contemptuous fling. Compared with the fierce assaults of Hutten or Erasmus, Brandt's contribution is certainly modest; a few words about the foolish students who waste their time over the "idle babbling" of logical puzzles exhaust the subject. Brandt's Humanism was not, as we know, that of Erasmus; it rested upon no such profound breach with the culture of the Middle Ages; and, moreover, satire against scholasticism could in no case have taken up much room in a mind so careless of purely intellectual perversities.

Pope tells us that every one was anxious to prove the author of the *Dunciad* himself a dunce. The same disposition naturally showed itself towards the author of the *Narrenschiff*; but Brandt, unlike Pope, boldly accepted the charge. He replies in the spirit of Touchstone's maxim, that he differs from his Fools chiefly in knowing that he is one. He does not even shrink from signing his name in the final couplet, habitual in sixteenth century poems, as "der Narr Sebastianus Brandt." "I know that I am still in the land of Fools," he says, "and though I shake my bells they will not fall off; but I have the industry to learn wherein others are Fools, and the courage, if God wills, to better myself in time." Modesty lay indeed at the root of Brandt's nature, and it is the starting-point of his satire. Unassuming yet cautious himself, he was impressed by the universal complacency with which men run into peril; he saw crime and folly, riot and misery, everywhere springing up from the illusions, self-confidence, or the exuberance of untempered animalism. The world seemed a chaos of contending wills, of ambitious pride, prejudice, envy, hatred, where every man was aiming out of his sphere, forgetting what became him, ignorant of his place. He thus came to conceive all wrong-doing under the category, as it were, of Folly, and made the two terms for half a century to come synonymous. The very form of his work reflected his way of approaching the subject. If men were knaves because they were (in the narrow sense) Fools, to show them their folly was the best way of curing their knavery. So he constructed his *Narrenspiegel*, in which every man might see himself as he was; and, that there might be the less mistake, headed each chapter with its trenchant woodcut to betray in the plainest black and white "that secret to each fool, that he's an ass." Brandt was certainly not one of those modest men who make up for depreciating themselves by exalting others. If he was severe with his own faults, he had no mercy for other men's; if he disparaged his own virtues, he had a somewhat dull eye for those which might lurk even among Fools. In short, he was modest for mankind at large; a moral pessimist, to whom the world

seemed in so bad a case that even the few exceptions from the general Folly should hardly dare to be serene. If the *Ship of Fools* derived its form from his hatred of self-admiration, it owed its bulk to the gloomy severity which found little to admire in any one else.

It would be idle to infer from the unparalleled popularity of the book that its readers shared its pessimism. Men like to have their faults abused in pithy verses, and still more to have them illustrated in amusing woodcuts. At the same time, it uttered a note which is to be heard in the background of popular literature all through the century. The rude, vigorous voice of the towns, the buoyant ring of the popular lyric, the busy murmur of licentious tales, do not overpower the note of despondency which by a sort of inverted irony precedes the dawn of modern times. It is a characteristic note of incipient and half-conscious Humanism, with its backward look, its unconsciousness that it stood on the threshold of a civilisation far vaster than that it sought to revive; its inability to sound the trumpet-call of faith in the To-come; its learning, a man of words and names without historic proportion; its moral creed, timidly compounded from the well-worn prescriptions of Solomon and Seneca. All this was soon to be changed; the infant Humanism was to grow robust, to sever itself utterly from the Middle Ages, to refuse absolute subjection even to Greece and Rome, and to develop in the process plenty of the serene arrogance which Brandt called Folly. Hand in hand, however, with this robust youth went another not less robust but more devout. The Reformation was the issue of no single cause; but, among others, it was a religious expression of the moral despondency of the day. Brandt at his midnight desk exorcising the Folly of mankind, is near akin to Luther in the convent of Eisenach learning from Augustine to believe the world helplessly sunk in sin. Ardent Catholic as he was, his book is a testimony to that which made the Reformation something more than a political revolt against Rome. And when the word he had minted anew had been hurled to and fro in the religious war till all its spirit had perished and it had become a mere vague, abusive epithet, when the "great Lutheran Narr" and its genial satirist Mur-narr, and Hans Sachs with his *Narrenfressers* and his *Narrenbads*, were of the past, then the ill-used word was laid to rest, and with it the reputation of Sebastian Brandt, until the present century, at once more catholic and more refined than its predecessor, again revived the rough, homely, vivid, and epoch-making *Ship of Fools*.

C. H. H.

Animal Mythology; or, Stories of Birds and Beasts.

THE spread and increase of knowledge naturally dispel many a conception of nature that lent a certain charm to the older-world's philosophy of the universe; and science and poetry are accordingly to some extent antagonistic forces in human life. We are so accustomed to think of the sun simply as the sun, of the Milky Way as a vast multitude of unknown worlds, of the yellow primrose as no more than the yellow primrose, or of a mountain as a mere mass of rocks that are geologically explicable, that we are apt to overlook a certain loss of interest which is involved in this newer reading of our daily surroundings, and to underrate the poetical advantages of our distant forefathers, who could think of the sun (as the Andamanese do still) as literally a woman with the stars for her children; to whom the Milky Way spoke of the calm repose of disembodied souls; for whom a flower could unlock magic mountains or hearts otherwise inaccessible to love; or to whom a snow-mountain might stand for a god whose splendour and glory might be legitimately adored. When we compare civilised life with its ruder beginnings, it is a satisfaction to think that our ancestors, whose fancies about such things so far represented their actual thoughts that the very languages of Europe to this day bear the impress of them in their construction, had this advantage over our later and truer knowledge, and so much compensation for having lived at a time in no respects more miserable than in this, that there was not yet laid up that capital of enjoyment accumulated from the past which gives to civilised life the greater part of its zest and interest. But even here the preponderance of gain is decidedly with the later time, for if we no longer mistake the stars for flowers, or for our departed friends, the red sunset no longer sends us dreams of worlds of fire, nor do we walk any longer with the fear of flaming nether gods before our eyes.

In relation to the animal world this change of thought and growth of knowledge has produced mixed results. We no longer offer hecatombs of victims to heedless divinities, but the barrier is undoubtedly wider between man and his humbler companions. No St. Francis could preach as once to little birds, nor call the swallows his sisters; for it would deduct too much from the dignity of our place in the scale of creation to allow to the animal world generally the possession of souls and the hopes of a brighter future which in earlier times were freely accorded to them, and are still among sundry savage races.

But it is not merely equality with man, but even superiority to him, that has been lost by what we now call the lower creation. We shall

perhaps never completely solve the problem, how it was that men ever came to pay actual worship to the rest of the animate world, and to pride themselves, as many savages do still, on their descent from a wolf, a bear, or, may be, even a worm. Probably the reasons were various. We may attribute something to the absence of any clear distinction of species in early life, there being so little difficulty of belief in the transmutation of even generic differences that there is no bird, beast, or fish into which not only men but deities are not instantaneously convertible. For instance, the belief that any man's soul or spirit may quit his body during sleep in the form of an animal supplies one of the commonest processes of conversion. To this day in Bohemia it is thought a dangerous thing to go to bed thirsty, lest the soul in the form of a mouse should wander out of the open mouth, and fail perhaps to find its way back;* and it is common in Germany for nurses and mothers to close the mouths of sleeping children, lest the soul should issue forth in mouse-like form, and the danger incurred by the mouse be shared by the sleeping infant.†

If the human soul can thus issue from the body in sleep, it is not unnatural to think of it as doing so at death; and the shamans or sorcerers, who fill so important a part in primitive life, would not be slow to avail themselves of an idea which would render death itself no barrier to the exercise of their power. By their survival in animal form they would retain after death the reverence paid to them in life, and thus the earliest notions of supernatural powers would confound the gods with the animal creation.

In this way any species of the animal world may be taken for departed generations of mankind; and it becomes intelligible that a Californian tribe should have held venison for unlawful food from a belief that the souls of bygone Californians animated the bodies of the larger game. How far all similar scruples with regard to particular forms of food—such as that of the early Britons to hares, or of the Jews to pigs—may have the same explanation at bottom, may be submitted to the speculation of the curious; but clearly the chase must have had an interest for our barbarous ancestors that it has lost in the garish light of modern civilisation, when bird or beast might be a friend in temporary disguise or possibly a relative of fond and recent remembrance.

A strong light on this method of regarding the animal world is afforded by very recent evidence from the Andaman Islands, the natives of which have always ranked among the lowest of the human race, and till lately were regarded as entirely destitute of religious ideas or traditions. Their theories of their relation to the animal world entirely accord with those which we may fairly suspect to have lain at the basis of the more advanced mythology of the Aryan nations. The first man, falling into a creek and being there drowned, was at once transformed into a whale, and became the father of all future cetaceans of that class; his wife and grandchildren, going in search of him in a boat, were by him

* Gröshman, *Sagen aus Böhmen*, 60. † Wuttke, *Deutsche Volksaberglaube*, 52.

capsized and drowned, she becoming a small crab and they being transformed into iguanas. A fish that is armed with a row of poisonous barbs on its back is a man who in a fit of jealousy killed another; and a certain tree-lizard retains the very same name that belonged to the unfortunate victim. Besides these, the rat, the pigeon, the parrot, the jungle fowl, the crow, the heron, the fish eagle, the porpoise, the shark, and various other fishes, are all transformed ancestors, with a definite legend to account for the transformation. It is even more curious to find the Andamanese in possession of a legend very like one told in Europe of the wren, that he once flew to heaven to bring down fire for mortals, and in consequence had his tail feathers burnt. A flood having extinguished all the fires of the people, and the four survivors of mankind being at a loss what to do, one of their deceased friends appeared to them in the form of a kingfisher. He flew up to the sky where the god Puluga was seated by his fire, seized and attempted to bear off on his back a burning log, but let it fall on Puluga, who in anger hurled it at the bold intruder, fortunately, however, missing him, so that the log descended on the very spot where the four fireless ones were deploring their fate.* To the Andamanese, therefore, it is evident that the greater part of the animal creation must appear in the light of transformed men and women rather than in that of birds, beast, or fish, which they present to less instructed observers.

The Zulus may supply us with similar evidence in their theory of the origin of baboons. To a Zulu a baboon is much less an animal than a man, whose transformation he is quite able to explain. It is one of Tusi's men, he says, when he kills one; and Tusi was a man of the Amafene tribe, a people so habitually idle that they would always eat at other people's houses rather than dig for themselves. Tusi, their chief, one day led them into the wilderness, where the handles of their digging implements gradually turned into tails, their foreheads became overhanging, and their bodies covered with hair; and from that time they went to the precipices and have had their dwelling among the rocks. So thought the Germans once of the storks; they were born as men in other parts of the world, and came to Germany in the form of birds.†

Nor should we forget the part played by hostilities in savage life as an element in the production of their natural philosophy. The great object being to inspire a hostile tribe with terror, a warrior calls himself for that purpose a wolf or a bear, or clothes himself and his followers with some part of their skins; and late generations of the same tribe come to believe that the original founder of their power was a real wolf or bear, and from either animal take their totem or crest.

But however much such causes as these contributed to the strange

* *Anthropological Journal*, Nov. 1882, 156-174.

† Gervasius of Tilbury. 'Sic ciconias asserunt in remotis orbis partibus homines esse et apud nos in avium specie vivere.' Kuhn's *Sagen aus Westfalen* ii. 69.

custom of animal worship, or to the still stranger belief in an animal origin of mankind, the state of thought in which they originated sprang from and kept alive a feeling of actual community between man and the rest of the animate creation that could not but be fertile in the production of mythology, nor fail to make the world the richer by a goodly store of animal fables and legends, based on a firm belief in the humanity of the lower creation.

From these ideas of the close intercommunion of all things, and of the rapid convertibility existing between every species of nature, we may pass to curious myths of the past or present, and find them more readily intelligible than by the popular explanation of them as symbols or allegories of the phases of the sky. The interconvertibility of Zeus, or Odin, or Indra with the animal creation is a point common to them all, and a point that connects them no less with the ruder gods of the aborigines of America or Polynesia. It is also a point that connects them with actual mortals, and more especially with mortals endowed with the attributes of sorcery or magic. But it is a point that only by a very forced construction can connect them with the sun or the heavens.

Zeus on his first visit to Here changed himself into a cuckoo, and so literally was this believed by the Greeks that the mountain on which they met was called afterwards in historical times the cuckoo mountain (*ὄρος κοκκύγιον*).¹ His transformation into a bull or a swan for amorous purposes is one of the first absurdities that repel our minds in youth from classical lore; nor is it easy to read with patience in the *Iliad* of Apollo and Athene watching the combat between the Greeks and Trojans from two beech-trees in the form of vultures. Yet all these things seemed as natural doubtless to the early Greek mind as it seemed to the Norseman for Odin, his supreme deity, to become a snake in order to creep through a hole, or an eagle in order to fly away, or for Toki to become a fly in order to sting more effectually. From such humble beginnings were the purer conceptions of Zeus and Indra in much later times evolved, till at last it became a source of wonder how such widely differing conceptions coexisted as that Zeus, who was the highest of the gods, could also have acted as he did in the well-known story of Europa.

The Odjibwa myth of Manabozho, who appears to have been the highest abstract personality known to Red Indian belief, affords a very close parallel to the older tales of Zeus or Odin. There was no form of life into which this strange being could not transform himself at will, or with which he could not readily converse. He had all the attributes and desires of a man, yet to a great extent the powers of a god, or of a superhuman sorcerer. His name long lived in connection with most of the striking peculiarities of natural history. If, for instance, the *adjidamo* or squirrel makes a barking or coughing noise on the approach of any one to its nest, the Indian knows how to refer it to the trick

* Grimm, *Deutsche Mythologie*, 644. Pausanias, i. 36.

Manabozho once played upon the moose and woodpecker. He invited them both to an entertainment of bear's flesh, which, as soon as they had tasted it, turned into dry powder and made them cough; but as they had too great a sense of decorum and too much respect for Manabozho, they continued to eat and to cough, till their clever host changed them at last into the coughing adjidamo.* Why, too, has the kingfisher a white mark on its breast, and why are the feathers on its head tufted? Because Manabozho once gave it a white sort of medal for useful information, and because the bird hardly escaped with the ruffling of its head feathers the attempt of Manabozho to wring its neck whilst he was so rewarding it. Why again has the woodpecker red feathers on its head? Because, when Manabozho was once engaged in mortal combat with a great Manito or spirit, the bird told the former the spot where his antagonist was vulnerable, and for reward had his head rubbed with the blood of the slain Manito.

Still more absurd is the legend which explains why the bear is so fat and the hare so thin, and why the duck has so few tail feathers. Manabozho once killed a fish of such gigantic size that its oil and fat formed a small lake, whither Manabozho invited all birds and animals to come and be fed, decreeing that the fatness of each should depend on the order in which they partook of his hospitality. The bear came first, and is therefore the fattest of animals. The moose and the bison were slower in coming, whilst the partridge looked on till the reservoir was nearly exhausted, and the hare and the marten, being the last to arrive, have consequently no fat at all. After the feast Manabozho made them all dance round him with their eyes shut, and so wrung the necks of the fatter ones as they passed him; but a small duck, suspiciously opening her eyes and observing the danger, instantly made for the water, only just reaching it, however, as Manabozho gave her such a kick that her back was flattened by it, and ducks for all future time marked as a race of birds enjoying but scanty tail-feathers.

Zoologists, like Mr. Darwin and others, have of course long since discountenanced this ready sort of explanation of natural peculiarities; but we cannot deny it the merits of ingenuity, and it at once supplies us with the key to similar legends of other lands, like the tragic Greek legend of Philomela, the unhappy sister of Procne, bewailing in the form of a nightingale the wrong done to her by her brother-in-law Tereus, who, to prevent her from informing her sister, deprived her of her tongue. Ask the Bushman why the jackal's back is black, and he will tell you that it is because that beast once carried the sun on his back, when he found the great luminary, yet a mortal on earth, sitting by the wayside aweary. Ask the native of Vancouver's Island why the loon has so melancholy a note, and he will tell you of the fisherman whom his companion first robbed of his fish and then cut out his tongue, so that when his friends

* Schoolcraft, *Algic Researches*, ii. 225.

enquired of him the sport he had had, he could only respond by a noise like the loon's, whose plaintive cry is still the voice of that luckless fisherman, trying in vain to make himself understood. Or ask again the Zulu why the hyrax has no tail wherewith to drive away the flies that trouble him, and you will be told that on the day when tails were distributed, the hyrax feared that it was going to rain, and so begged the other animals to bring him his tail, to save himself the trouble of going. Whence to this day, if one Zulu asks another to do or fetch something for him, simply out of laziness, he must expect to be met with the reproachful proverb, "The hyrax went without a tail because he sent for it."

Science has taught us that the action of natural causes now in existence—the action of rains, rivers, floods, and earthquakes—sufficed to produce all the great changes of geology which have turned many times the dry land into sea, and the seas again into dry land. So it is with mythology: the same causes produce it to-day that produced it long ago, when two goats led Thor's chariot through the sky, or when two ravens brought to the ears of Odin the news of the whole wide world. Disuse of language may now and again have necessitated an explanation of forgotten words, and so produced a myth, but the primary cause was the wonder and curiosity that seem natural to the human mind, and the play of imagination, founded on the facts of common experience, to which such curiosity has always impelled speculative minds. The following myths, therefore, from modern Europe may be adduced, as corresponding precisely in origin and construction to the essays in natural history already told by the Red Indian, the Aht, the Bushman, or the Zulu.

The nightingale's song, which it has often been attempted to arrange in syllables of human speech, is in Westphalia arranged in this way: *Is tit, is tit, is tit, to wit, to wit—Trizy, Trizy, Trizy, to bucht, to bucht, to bucht*. Now, the last syllables form the shepherd's cry to his dog when he wishes the sheep collected. Here then lies the germ for a myth. *Trizy* must be the dog to whom the cry "*to bucht*" is addressed. Accordingly the nightingale is a shepherdess, who was once unkind to a shepherd that loved her; she was always promising but postponing marriage, till at last the shepherd could bear it no longer, and uttered the wish that she might not sleep till the day of judgment. Nor does she; for her voice may be always heard at night, as she cries *to bucht, to bucht, to bucht*, to her good dog *Trizy*.*

Why has the shard or flounder a face that is all awry, with its eyes on one side of it, and not straight like those of most other fish? Its face was like theirs once, they say, till it made a mocking face at a passing herring, and addressed it with an insulting question: for punishment, it could never draw its face back straight again.† But the

* Kuhn, *Sagen, &c., aus Westfalen*, ii. 75.

† *Ib.* ii. 80.

same account should be given of the turbot, the pole, the sole, the dab, the whiff, the plaice, and the halibut, for they all have the same peculiar formation of the eyes.

It is a common belief that the cuckoo is a transformed girl, calling her brother. In Servia the cuckoo, *kukavitza*, was a girl who lamented her brother's death so long that she was turned into a cuckoo.* This in itself is not very circumstantial, but Albania supplies a more complete story. There were once two brothers and a sister. The latter accidentally killed one of them, by getting up suddenly from her needle-work and piercing him to the heart with her scissors. She and the surviving brother mourned so much that they were turned into birds; he cries out to the lost brother by night *gjon, gjon*, and she by day *ku ku, ku ku*, which means, "Where are you?" †

The cuckoo, says the Bohemian legend, once had a crown on her head, till at a wedding among the birds, at which the hoopoe was bridegroom, she lent it and has never been able to get it back. He is always crying out *Kluku*, which means "You rascal," to which the other replies *jdu, jdu*, "I come, I come," but comes not. ‡

The Bohemians also take the cuckoo for an enchanted miller or baker. The latter is the more interesting story, as being either of post-Christian origin, or else a pagan memory transferred, as so often happened, into a Christian dress. Christ, passing one day a baker's shop, sent one of his disciples in to ask for some new bread. The baker refused to give it, but his wife and six daughters, who were more compassionate, delivered some secretly to the disciple. In reward they were placed among the stars, as the Pleiades; but the baker was turned into a cuckoo, and it confirms this story, that his cry is heard as long as those seven stars are visible in the sky.

In Poland long ago it was a capital crime to kill a cuckoo. The apparent reason was that Zywiec, who in old Slavonic mythology was the ruler of the universe, used to change himself (as Zeus once did and Indra too) § into a cuckoo, in order to announce to mortals the number of years they had to live; a belief so real that multitudes used to flock every May to Zywiec's temple on the mountain that was called after his name, to pray for long life and prosperous health. || To this day it is a common article of folk-lore belief that so many years yet remain to a man of life as he hears the cuckoo's voice for the first time in the spring. And a monkish historian has handed down, for the edification of posterity, the story of that worldly-minded brother who, tired of the monotony of convent life, resolved to ask of the cuckoo the number of years yet allotted him to live. The bird having said twenty-two, the monk resolved to devote himself for a season to the pleasures of this world and yet have time before him to prepare for the next; but, alas! the bird was a heathenish

* Grimm, *D. M.*, 646.

† Hahn, *Griechische Märchen*, ii. 144.

‡ Grohman, 68.

§ De Gubernatis, *Zoological Mythology*, ii. 229, 231.

|| Grimm, *D. M.*, 641.

and therefore a false oracle to listen to, and death surprised the recreant monk in the twentieth year, still absorbed in temporal enjoyments and vanities.

The introduction of Christianity into Europe made no difference to the formation of mythology, which only received the newer faith as a fresh source of nutriment, but otherwise continued with unabated vigour. The robin's breast was red, from the thorn he extracted from the thorn-crown of Christ, or from his daily visits to hell with a drop of water to throw upon the flames. That was or became the reason for never doing it an injury, and the older reason, derived from worship or superstition, was gradually forgotten. So the crossbill in Bohemia is sacred, because at the Crucifixion it endeavoured to extract the nails; whilst the actual Bohemian word for the bee is derived from its association with the same event, and its merciful efforts to afford relief.* In Iceland seals are regarded as the followers of Pharaoh who were drowned in the Red Sea, and who on St. John's Eve land and resume for a brief period the shape of mortals. The cat in Iceland represents the devil's attempt to create a man, though he so far failed even in that, that St. Peter had in pity to add to it a skin:† a story which has a closely similar parallel as far off as Albania, where the same attempt resulted in a wolf, but in a wolf which required extraneous aid to endow it with life.‡ It is doubtless in consequence of some similar legend that a certain bird in Iceland goes by the name of St. Peter's puffin, and a certain fish by that of St. Peter's purse, as the dory is connected with him in England and France, being known in the latter country as the *poisson de St. Pierre*.

The Christian who has ever wondered why a cock on a church steeple should serve as a weathercock connects it naturally with the reproach that bird once conveyed to St. Peter. But the cock used to be placed on the tops of sacred trees before it was transferred to church steeples, and it is said to be still made to stand on maypoles in the north of Germany.§ Its function was formerly partly that of a watchman and partly that of a weather prophet; and by its crowing it could also disperse evil spirits and all the train of approaching calamity. Cocks appear generally to have attracted feelings of sanctity, for in Persia and India their lives are or were sacred, and Cicero speaks of the ancients regarding the killing of a cock as equivalent in wrong to the suffocation of a father. It seems quite superfluous to connect all these and similar customs with a primitive personification of the sun applied to the domestic fowls; to say, for instance, that "the pearl which the fowl searches for in the dunghill is nought else but its own egg, and the egg of the hen in the sky is the sun itself;" or again that "the hen of the fable and fairy tales, which lays golden eggs, is the mythical hen (the

* Grohman, 84. "Die Biene (veela) hat ihren Namen davon, dass sie sich tief auf die Stirne (na celo) des gekreuzigten Heilandes setzte und den Schweiss von ihm sog."

† Maurer, *Isländische Volksagen*, 190.

‡ Hahn, ii. 145.

§ Montanus, *Deutsche Volksfeste*, &c., ii. 175.

earth or the sky) which gives birth every day to the sun."* How would the solar mythologist connect with the sun the custom in the Tirol of not letting a black hen live for seven years, from the belief that at that period she may lay an egg out of which may issue a dragon destined to live a hundred years?†

To return to the influence of Christianity on mythology. One result has been, that in the attempt to dispel pagan superstitions, a half-success often shows itself in the feelings with which certain objects in creation are still regarded. As a rule, Christian folk-lore should and does reverse the pagan estimate of things, honouring what was formerly held in dishonour, and despising what was formerly honoured. Thus the cat or serpent occupies a place of evil augury and low honour, proportioned to the reverse position once assigned to it, when cats were thought worthy to draw the chariot of Freja, and reptiles of all sorts deserving of worship. Yet the older feelings survive in the sanctity which in some places still protects the cat's life, and in the reverence yet paid all over Europe to a certain kind of house snake which is regarded partly as a guardian angel and partly as the bearer of good fortune to mankind. The idea of such snakes as embodying the dead, which accounts for precisely the same reverence being still paid to them in Zululand, probably also accounts for the European superstitions which are or have been attached to them. This sort of snake in Germany and Switzerland is commonly regarded as a most desirable guest, whose presence is a sure earnest of blessing, and who must, therefore, on no account be killed, but fed with milk and honoured in every way.‡ A number of them in a house are taken to represent each member of the family; so much so that the death of the reptile causes a fearful foreboding of the death of the individual whose representative it is. And if innocuous snakes were once worshipped, probably as dead ancestors, and are therefore to this day revered in secret, in spite of the very opposite associations of the newer religion, primitive philosophy found no difficulty in explaining the existence of harmful snakes or other creatures of baneful tendency. It comes from a sort of curse put upon them, it is said in the Tirol, for having escaped without a blessing at the time of the creation. And it is still told there, how the blind adder once enjoyed eyesight like other snakes, till, having frightened the Madonna as she sat in the grass with the child Jesus, it was punished thenceforth with total blindness. In the general German theory, that snakes are really the old goddess Hertha and her train, so transformed at the time of the conversion of Germany from paganism, is a clear trace of an attempt to counteract the more primitive view of snakes by one more in accordance with Christian sentiment and belief.

¶ That some creatures should have gained the reputation and character

* De Gubernatis, *Z. M.*, ii. 291-2.

† Wütke, *Folksaberglaube*, 51.

‡ *Ib.*, 50.

of piety is perhaps another result of the influence of Christianity on mythology. Among animals, for instance, the deer is called "pious;" and the swallow, the stork, and the lark are all "pious" birds in Germany. It would almost seem as if early Christian thought did not regard the animal world as altogether outside the pale of religious feeling. The stag, in German popular belief, kneels down and weeps when it is wounded or dying.* The *pious* swallow twitters a song at dawn to the mother of God; the *pious* lark is sacred to her, and rises in prayer upwards, setting an example of grace-giving both before and after food, so that it is likely that a child will grow up pious whose first meat is lark's flesh; and the *pious* stork sets an example no less of matrimonial constancy and fidelity than of dutiful affection to parents.† On the other hand the unhappy bat early became associated with an irreligious character, its shrill notes being popularly taken for the utterance of wicked blasphemies; so that in France and Sicily it used when caught to be cruelly tortured, burnt, or nailed alive to small crosses; which of course made it blaspheme all the more and added confirmation to the popular fancy.‡

It is not always easy to account for the piety ascribed to particular species of creatures, and for the reverence consequently paid to them. The piety of the stag may be connected with its fabulous hostility to snakes, or with the tale of its having met St. Humbert in the chase, and converted him to Christianity by the help of the cross it carried on its head. Sig. De Gubernatis, as usual, recognises the moon in the hind which piously nourished the hermit Ægidius, dwelling in the forest; and of the primitive Christian custom of assuming the disguise of a hind or an old woman at the beginning of January, he says: "The old woman and the hind here evidently represent the witch or ugly woman of winter; and inasmuch as the winter is, like the night, under the moon's influence, the disguise of a hind was another way of representing the moon."§ If we lay aside altogether the aid of common sense, we may perhaps accept this rendering; but it will be more to the credit of our sanity if we simply take the facts as we find them, and admit that their origin has been not yet discovered, if we have no better one than this to give for them.

But the ingenuity of mortals has not always suffered itself to be thus baffled for the want of an explanation. Take for instance the pious swallow whose nest may not be disturbed and whose life is sacred, under the sanction of severe penalties affecting the milk given by cows. In Germany the swallows are called the Madonna's birds, and in parts of France *la poule de Dieu*, all good French people (except, for some strange reason, those of the city of Arles) accounting it sacrilege to kill a swallow. The French have two stories to account for this sacred character of the bird. One is that at the Crucifixion they took away

* Montanus, ii. 167.

† *Ib.* 177, and Solinus, *Polyhistor*, xl. 25.

‡ Rolland, *Faune Populaire de la France*, i. 5, 6.

§ *Zool. Myth.* ii. 88.

the crown of thorns. The other is, that when Christ was one day resting in a wood after a pursuit by the Jews, the magpies came and covered him all over with thorns, which the swallows in compassion came and extricated. Therefore was it said to the magpie: "Thou shalt make thy nest on the topmost branches of the trees and be universally detested;" and to the swallow, "Thou shalt make thy nest in shelter from all danger and shalt be universally beloved."* But of course these stories may have been invented to account for pre-existing feelings, and not really have preceded them as their origin.

However that may be, the ingenuity of the myth-maker cannot be too much admired which accounts in one and the same story for the honour paid to one bird and the ill favour which is the portion of the other. The snake itself is scarcely less propitious than the magpie, which in Scotland used to be called the devil's bird, being credited with carrying in her tongue a drop of the devil's blood, and whose appearance in England still provokes the superstitious to an ill-becoming exhibition of their nervousness. One legend, of a similar kind to the preceding one, attributes the magpie's disfavour to its unseemly conduct at the Crucifixion, when in company with the robin it was present on that occasion. The magpie up to that time was the most beautiful of all birds, with a lovely voice and a tail like a peacock's, whilst the robin was only a poor grey insignificant little bird. But because the magpie was heartless and insolent, and the robin, on the contrary, extracted the thorns, the one was punished ever after with the loss of its voice and beauty, and the other rewarded with the permanent affection of mankind.†

It is curious to note these quasi-moral reasons given for the peculiarities of the natural world, and their close resemblance to the philosophy contained in the stories already told of Manabozho and the animals of North America. The following French legend of the woodpecker is especially remarkable for associating birds with theories of cosmogony, just as birds and animals were associated in similar legends across the Atlantic. When the seas and lakes and rivers were being made, all the birds were charged with the task of making the channels or reservoirs that were to receive the water, but the woodpecker alone disobeyed, and because he refused to dig the earth with his beak, he was condemned to dig with it the wood of trees for ever; and because he would lend no aid to construct the receptacles of terrestrial water, he was confined thenceforth to drink only of the water of heaven, and that is why his head is so constantly turned skywards, and why with his cry "plui-plui" he still invokes the clouds to send him rain.‡ According to North American belief, as reported by Franklin, after a deluge had resulted from an attempt of the fish to drown Wasackootacht, with whom they had quarrelled, and this mythical

* Rolland, ii. 320.

† Rolland, ii. 263. Compare *Notes and Queries*, 1st series, vi. 344.

‡ Rolland, ii. 63.

god or hero had ordered several kinds of waterfowl to dive to the bottom to bring back some earth, all of them were drowned till the musk-rat succeeded in returning with a mouthful of mud, with which Wasackootacht made a new earth, by imitating the manner in which rats construct their houses.* So the Minnetaree Indians held that everything was water, till the first man sent down a great red-eyed bird to bring up the earth. The French and the Indian legends are of a precisely similar kind, and the similarity between them is a yet further proof that, whether in civilisation or barbarism, the formation of mythology is conducted in almost identical grooves of reflection and fancy. Sitting round winter fires or resting under the shadows of trees from the solar rays, the imaginative heads of all ages and countries construct those ridiculous stories which come in aftertimes to puzzle the learned and to give birth to explanations almost as absurd as the legends they are thought to elucidate.

So strictly fettered, moreover, is human imagination that even in fables drawn from observation of the habits or appearances of the animal world the most striking similarity often makes itself apparent. *Æsop's* fable of the hare and the tortoise has long since entered into the intellectual treasury of the whole civilised world; but the *Odjibwa* savages had one so like it that but for trifling differences one might suppose it to have been of foreign importation, and a result of contact with European influences. The pigeon-hawk challenged the tortoise to a race, which the tortoise declined save on the understanding that the race should extend over several days. The bird naturally accepted the amendment readily enough, but the tortoise, who knew that his chances of victory depended on his diligence, "went down into the earth, and, taking a straight line, stopped for nothing. The hawk, on the contrary, knowing that he could easily beat his competitor, kept carelessly flying this way and that way in the air, stopping now to visit one and then another, till so much time had been lost that when he came in sight of the winning point the tortoise had just come up out of the earth and gained the prize."†

The names of those who invent or improve these fables and stories remain unknown to fame, but there is no peasant so lowly or humble but he may hope to leave some lasting impression on that class of the mental products of humankind which is called mythology, and is of almost indestructible tenacity. Why, we may be tempted to ask in wonder, should the Germans look on squirrels as transformed girls, or on storks as transformed men? Why should the native Americans have regarded the robin as a boy, so metamorphosed after over-fasting? Because such ideas enter naturally into uncultivated minds, and are therefore as easily propagated and retained. "It was a proud woman, sir," said an old molecatcher in Somersetshire to an inquirer about the mole, "too

* Franklin, *Voyage to Shores of Polar Sea*, 113.

† *Algic Researches*, ii. 181.

proud to live on the face of the earth, and so God turned her into a mole and made her live under the earth; and that was the first mole." And the informant appealed to the hands and feet of a mole, as clearly those of a Christian, in support of his theory.* That is the sort of way these stories originate, and the less we look to the skies, to the sun or moon, to guide us to a rational understanding of them, the less are we likely to waste our time or imperil the soundness of our understanding.

Sometimes the myth-making faculty directs itself, not to the animal itself, but to the word which denotes it. It is extraordinary how little light philologists have as yet thrown on the meaning of the common names applied to the animate creation. The French word *loup* for a wolf is of course from the Latin *lupus*, but whence and what is the meaning of *lupus*? There is no explanation of such words as cat, horse, or cow, even if we can carry them back to the Sanskrit. The French *sanglier* for a boar, from the Latin *singularis*, in allusion to the supposed solitariness of that animal, which is only true of the older boars, affords a rare instance of an intelligible derivation. But when the myth-makers make this their field, the result is dreadful, if at least the following French derivation of the word *ours* (bear) may be taken as a fair specimen in this direction:—"Du temps que Dieu vivait sur la terre, un homme caché dans un bois voulut lui faire peur, et écria brusquement oche. Dieu lui dit, Tu seras comme-tu as dit" (oche=*ours*).† It need hardly be said that *ours* is from the Latin *ursus*.

In default of derivations the genders still belonging to birds and beasts in most languages suffice to carry us back to the primitive conception of them as transmuted men and women, a conception, however, which was by no means confined to the animate creation. The founders of our still spoken languages must have dwelt in a magic world, where they saw no essential difference, no impassable gulf, between themselves and animals and trees, nor between themselves and rocks and stones. Our children still need time to learn the difference, and there is abundant evidence of modern savages who have yet to learn it. No other theory will readily explain to us why the hawk in Germany, for instance, should rejoice, as the grammarians would say, in the masculine, and the lark in the feminine, gender; or why the cat, which is feminine in German (*die Katze*), should meet us in French in the masculine (*le chat*). How much such a theory is in keeping with the known facts of the growth of mythology is attested by such tales as have been already told of the bear, the mole, or the cuckoo.

It occasionally happens that the name of an animal, in itself of unknown derivation, stands as the root to some other word, and thereby throws a curious light on the mental state of those who framed the derivative. The word *katze*, a cat, affords a good case in point. This humble word has baffled even Grimm himself, but the word *ketzer* (*katzer*) for a heretic is admitted to be a derivative from it. How came

* Notes and Queries, 1st series, v. 534.

† Rolland, i. 42.

this about? The answer is tolerably clear. That a witch and a black cat were not merely invariably associated together, but very often regarded as one and the same natural phenomenon by that process of instantaneous conversion which has already been shown to be the key-note of all mythology, is known to all who have waded never so little amid the melancholy annals of the arts of sorcery. Thus in the Monferrato peculiar dread still attaches to all cats seen on the roofs of houses in February, from the belief that they are not really cats but witches, whom it is therefore desirable to shoot.* But it is perhaps less well known how intimate was the original connection in men's minds between witchcraft and heresy. In popular German imagination, the Waldenses, the Albigenses, and even the Templar knights were credited with worshipping a large black cat, and this association of ideas resulted in the word *kätzer* or *ketzer* for a heretic.† If, therefore, it was once the custom in France every St. John's Day, with hymns and anthems and processions of priests, to throw twenty-four live cats into a large fire, kindled by the bishops and clergy in the public square, the practice will appear to have been strictly in keeping with the ceremony of burning heretics, which, to the eternal discredit of the Christian Church, afforded interest and delight to our forefathers. It is a curious reflection for a Protestant to make when he beholds a black cat, that in the minds of good Catholics of bygone days himself and that vulgar animal would have stood for well-nigh convertible terms.

If primitive thought regarded mankind and other animals as interconvertible during life, it did not hesitate to carry this fundamental belief to its logical conclusion, and to see in the stars of heaven the continued life of the lower creation no less than of man. It must have often struck the most cursory observer of a celestial globe or atlas with wonder that the objects thereon depicted should have been ever imagined to have the least correspondence to the stars and planets. For the purpose of a convenient mapping out of the heavens these imaginary figures may have their use, but no scientific astronomer would have thought of arranging the stars in the form of a wolf, or a lion, or a scorpion, had he been set fresh to the task. He accepted the names as they had been handed down by tradition, without reflecting that the names themselves descended from a time when those and other forms of life were actually thought to be embodied in the stars. The Indians of America who told of the fisherman that once trespassed in heaven in the quest of perpetual summer, and was shot by an arrow from one of the celestials, could point to the very Fisher Stars, where the arrow could be actually seen in the fisherman's tail.‡ To the native Australians two large stars in the fore legs of Centaurus were two brothers who speared Tchingal to death, the east stars of Crux being the points of spears that pierced his body. The

* De Gubernatis, *Z. M.*, ii. 62.

† Montanus, ii. 166. Grimm, *Deutsches Wörterbuch*.

‡ *Algie Researches*, i. 66.

Bushman sees in the Milky Way some wood ashes thrown up into the sky by a girl, that people might see their way home at night; and he regards the more conspicuous stars as men, lions, tortoises, and so forth. And Egede tells us that the notion of the Esquimaux about the stars was that some of them had been men and others different sorts of animals or fishes.

Is it not, therefore, probable that our own ancestors, Aryans or others, interpreted the star-lit heavens in the same way, and that thus originated those names and figures attached to the constellations which are so great a perplexity to ourselves? Why should it be strange to us that the Greeks gave the name of Bear to that set of stars which we still so denominate, or that the Hindus should have seen in them seven *rishi*, or wise men? Perhaps the early Greeks worshipped among other things a bear whom they afterwards placed on high, as the Norse-god Thor was once thought of as a bear, and actually so called,* and as one of the names of Odin was Snake (Svafnir, Ofnir).† The fact that the Great Bear does not shine more than other stars makes this theory altogether more probable than the theory which accounts for the name from the development of a root which meant to *shine*. "From a root which meant 'to shine,'" says Sir G. Cox, "the Seven Shiners received their name; possibly or probably to the same root belongs the name of the Golden Bear (*ἄρκτος* and *ursa*). . . . and thus, when the epithet had by some tribes been confined to the Bear, the Seven Shiners were transformed first into seven bears, then into one with *Arktouros* (Arcturus) for their bearward. In India, too, the name of *riksha* was forgotten, but instead of referring the word to bears, they confounded it with *rishi*, and the Seven Stars became the abode of the seven poets or sages, who enter the ark with Menu (Minos), and reappear as the Seven Wise Men of Hellas, and the Seven Champions of Christendom."‡ The Arcadian tale, which Sir G. Cox refers to, of Kallisto, the mother of Arcas, being changed into a bear by the jealousy of Hêrê, and imprisoned in the Bear constellation, is altogether a more likely source of the name by which it was known in Greece and is still popularly known in England, for it is in perfect accordance with the way in which similar names are applied to the stars by all or most of the ruder races of mankind.

Mythology and folk-lore are closely connected, but not necessarily as cause and effect. Both spring up in the same low level of culture, and mythology is less the origin of superstitious ideas and customs than the transference of such pre-existing ideas and customs to the explanation of remarkable phenomena. Even when a myth is told as the direct explanation of a custom, as when for instance the Polish reverence for the cuckoo

* Mannhardt, *Götterwelt*. "In alten Zeiten ist Thörr selbst einmal als Bär gedacht worden; er führte noch später den Beinamen Bjorn (Bär)."

† Menzel, *Zur deutschen Mythologie*, 53.

‡ *Mythology of Aryan Nations*, i. 47.

is derived from the story of the god Zywiec assuming that form, it is at least as likely as not that the custom came first, and that the myth was really invented afterwards to supply an explanation that was felt to be needed. But when we find birds and insects and animals playing leading parts in so many tales of the gods and heroes, it is because they were already accredited by popular superstition with the powers therein displayed by them. If, for example, Phœbus trying to win Daphne, or Psyche to recover Eros, or Boots to find the enchanted princess, are assisted by bears, wolves, ducks, swans, eagles, or ants, why should we say that "all these are names under which the old mythical language spoke of the clouds, or the winds, or of the light which conquers darkness," * rather than that they formed natural and obvious ingredients in the story, like the aid given by the woodpecker to Manabozho, or the jackal's kindness to the sun in South Africa ?

With regard to beautiful princesses shut up in enchanted castles and guarded by dragons, whence they are afterwards rescued by wandering heroes (which, of course, may easily be forced to mean the sun rescuing Aurora from the night), a very realistic explanation applies to such stories in Northern lands. The rude castellated forts of the Scandinavians were generally perched on the tops of rocks or precipices, surrounded by a wall often called by a word denoting a serpent or a dragon, wherein in times of war it was common in former ages to secure the women from the assaults of the enemy.†

There are few animals round which more folk-lore still lingers than the horse, and we may take it as affording a good illustration of the real relationship between superstition and mythology. Horses are able to see the spirits of the dead, and houses at which they shy must expect calamity. Their teeth are a preservative against toothache, and a horse's hoof under a child's pillow will avert convulsions. We all know that the hoof is a marvellous luck-bringer, and in the mountainous parts of Germany a horse's head may still be seen over the doors of cattle-stalls, or about the houses. This may all date from the time when, as Tacitus tells us, our ancestors kept white horses at the public expense in sacred groves, exempting them from all toil and presaging the future from their neighings. To a warrior the neighing of a horse was a sure pledge of coming victory, as his silence was of defeat ; and it is remarkable that so late as the battle of Agincourt, the French should have augured badly for their success from the fact of their horses not having neighed the night preceding it. From the importance, therefore, which already appertained to the horse as an object of worship and superstition it was but natural that it should figure conspicuously in the mythology of all nations, from the horses that drew Indra or Phœbus, to Pegasus the winged steed that served Bellerophon. But this method of interpretation reverses the more usual method, which assumes the mythology to

* Sir G. Cox, *Aryan Myth.*, ii, 405.

† Crichton's *Scandinavia*, i, 195.

be primary, and deduces all superstition therefrom. It places the worship and the superstition first, and the mythology in the second place.

There is no difficulty in explaining the myths and legends of the Greeks or Hindus if we simply assume that their minds were constituted as the Zulu or Andamanese mind is constituted now, and found vent in the same inferences about the things around them. Nor need we even go so far as the Andaman Islands or South Africa in search of a parallel, for it has been shown that our European peasantry still construct mythology in the old-fashioned way, and with difficulty depart from the ancestral view of things. *Nequaquam bestiam aliquam pro deo colere debemus*, "we should on no account worship any animal as a god," said a bishop of Prague even in the eleventh century; and who shall say that the old worshipful feelings are yet extinct? The sandy path is still shown on the left bank of the Rhine that the mice took on their journey from the Netherlands to Bingen, when they went to punish the bishop Hatto of Mainz for his destruction of the granaries, and *Mäusepfad*, or mouse-path, is its appellation yet.* The sorcerers of France can still send swarms of rats and the like vermin against houses whose owners they may wish to spite, and since it is not lawful to kill rats or moles, inasmuch as they too are God's creatures, they are exorcised by writings on bits of paper suspended on trees. "Rats, male and female," writes the peasant, "I conjure you in the name of St. Gertrude to depart to the plain of Rocroi." Or, again, he will bid them leave his corn, and go for food to the *curé* :

Laissez pousser nos blés,
Courez chez les curés,
Dans leurs caves vous aurez
A boire autant qu'à manger.†

There is scarcely a village in Switzerland that has not its belief in and dread of some mythical beast, horse, or cow, of ghostly or unearthly character, the mixed product of fear and fancy. These animals are, as a rule, the form taken by some wicked celebrity of old times at the close of his or her mortal career. Thus about Brugg at Christmas-tide, a man should beware of meeting the cat, dog, calf, or ox, which is the form taken by a certain *ammann* of former days, who cheated the commune out of 500 guldens and was condemned to wander in animal shape for as many years.‡ So, too, woe betide the German who meets the white horse, that breathes fire, and careers about the Harz mountains, invariably visiting with death the unhappy victim on whose shoulders he springs with his forelegs.§

If, therefore, these things are not merely told but believed by a

* Montanus, ii. 172.

† Rolland, i. 23-26.

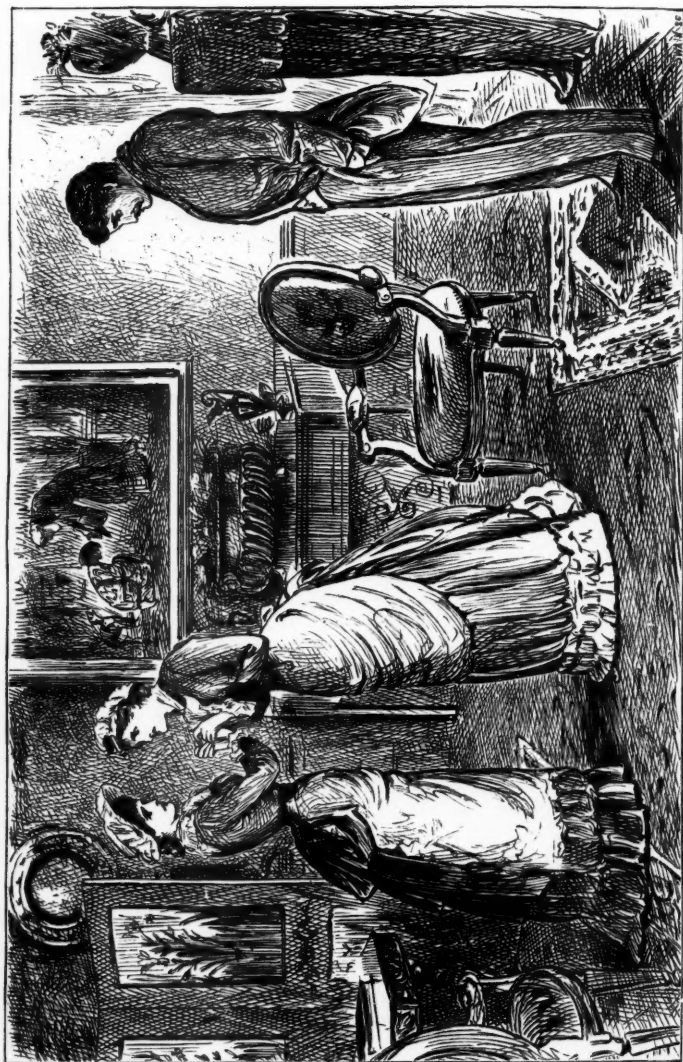
‡ Rochholz, *Naturmythen*, 78. In the *Schweizersagen* by the same writer are numerous stories of the same sort.

§ Montanus, ii. 162.

great portion of the population of our own day, can we any longer wonder that they should have been as vividly believed thousands of years ago, or that a goodly mixture of legends should have resulted from similar conceptions of ghostly animals of human origin, or of real animals which might be men and might be gods, and might therefore be credited with the qualities of either? Need we any longer suppose that every myth and every custom of the past is derived from the poetical imagery in which our ancestors are supposed to have been always representing to themselves the sun's course from rising to setting, or its conflict with the clouds or the night? And if not, where is the value of the many volumes that have been written to prove that derivation?

J. A. FARRER.

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"WE MUST ALL FORGIVE SOMETIMES."

No New Thing.

CHAPTER XXIX.

"PECCAVI!"



MARGARET STANNIFORTH was sitting in the library at Longbourne, enjoying the repose of solitude and of a lovely June afternoon. She was enjoying these things, that is, as far as it was possible to her to do so; for, unluckily for her, she was not one of those people who are good company for themselves. In order thoroughly to appreciate the charm of being alone, persons of her temperament must be very happy or very

much the reverse; and at this time she was neither the one nor the other. She had, moreover, various causes for disquietude and anxiety, and these were apt to rise up before her in dismal array when she had nothing else to do than to think about them. Philip's letters had of late been few and short; it was only too clear that things were not turning out in accordance with his wishes; and what was worse than this was that Nellie appeared, most unreasonably, to cherish a grudge against him on account of the course which he had seen fit to pursue, and persistently changed the subject when his name was mentioned. It was chiefly on Philip's behalf that Margaret felt ill at ease; but there was another small matter which disturbed her peace a good deal in these days, and which was certainly not among the annoyances to which any one would have supposed her likely to be liable.

"Exceeding her income!—exceeding fifteen thousand five hundred a year!" exclaimed old Mr. Stanniforth, when Hugh journeyed to Manchester for the express purpose of making a singular communication to

him. "Then all I can say is that she must have a nest of first-class robbers under her roof!"

The old gentleman had, however, made no great difficulty about authorising his co-executor to sell out certain securities; and in this manner the cost of Mrs. Winnington's residence and entertainments in Park Street had been defrayed.

Given a proportionate style of living, it is not much more difficult to exceed fifteen thousand than fifteen hundred a year; and poor Margaret's financial talents were of the slenderest order. During the first days of her wealth, when it had seemed to her that her income was practically boundless, she had responded liberally to every appeal for charity that had been made to her, and she would not now reduce subscriptions which were really out of all keeping with her resources. Later on, the charity which begins at home had been forcibly brought to her notice by her mother, who knew how far money would go, if any one did, but who not unjustifiably argued that Margaret was quite the richest woman of her acquaintance. The expense of living at Longbourne this economist assessed at about one-third of her daughter's income, leaving a balance of at least 9,000*l.* per annum to be devoted to the relief of the deserving. As a matter of fact, Longbourne cost Mrs. Stanniforth very nearly double the sum assigned thereto by her mother; and when to this was added the maintenance of such very expensive persons as Mrs. Winnington herself and Philip Marescalchi had become, it will be seen that not much margin was left for unforeseen calls.

So it came about that Margaret, instead of laying by money, often found herself pinched for the want of it; and this it was that caused her pangs of self-reproach, and, among other things, made solitude distasteful to her. She moved about the room restlessly, wondering—as she had so often done in the course of her rather unhappy life—why responsibilities which she was utterly incapable of exercising should have been cast upon her, and whether, upon the whole, it would not have been a great deal better for everybody if she had never been born.

"I wish somebody would come and see me," she thought; "I wish Hugh would come. And, oh! how I wish Philip would come back!"

She was standing by the window when she uttered this last aspiration aloud, and hardly had she done so when her eye was attracted by a slowly-moving black object which was advancing far away across the sunny expanse of the park. This, by degrees, took the distinct shape of one of the ramshackle flies from Crayminster station, and as it drew nearer it became evident that there was luggage upon the box. Then Margaret drew in her breath, while her face lighted up with joyous surprise; for who but one person could be driving up to Longbourne provided with two large portemanteaux and a hat-box?

All doubt was soon at an end. The fly rolled up over the gravel, and stopped at the door; a dusty traveller descended; and in another minute Mr. Marescalchi was in Margaret's arms. Philip wore a rueful

countenance. When the first inarticulate sounds of welcome and salutation had been interchanged, he dropped down upon a sofa, made gestures intended to simulate the rending of his clothes and the heaping of dust upon his head, and began in a lamentable voice :—

"Where's the fatted calf, Meg? Send for the ring and the new garment, and let us eat, drink, and be merry. Walk up, ladies and gentlemen! walk up, and see the show. Here's your fine old genuine prodigal; there's no deception. I've wasted my substance in a far country, I've lived among—well, we won't push the parallel too far. Meg, I have come home to confess my sins. I am no more worthy——"

Margaret laid her hand upon his lips. "Hush!" she said. "I don't like to hear you make fun of the Bible."

"Fun!—I make fun!" groaned Philip. "Oh dear, oh dear! you little know how far I am from being in a jocose humour. I am trying to stave off the evil moment, that's all."

"There can be no evil moments now that you have come back to me safe and sound," said Margaret quickly.

"Yes; that's the proper spirit in which to receive the prodigal. And yet the evil moment has to be got through. I have made a mess of it, Meg—a thorough, complete, and satisfactory mess of it. I was within a hair's breadth of being the owner of Longbourne; but the laws of England, which look favourably upon the splitting of hairs, won't allow of their being swept away altogether; and so I am landless and nameless, and my parents were never man and wife, because they forgot that the Union Jack was flying within a stone's throw of the church in which they were married."

Philip then related how and why he had failed to attain the object of his journey to Florence, and basked for a while in the warmth of affectionate sympathy.

"I do think it is most abominably unjust," exclaimed Margaret. "What more can people do than be married in church? As if a mere contract made in a Consul's office could be as important as that! Tom Stanniforth, who is so fond of taking up other people's grievances, ought really to bring this one before Parliament."

"On public grounds, I dare say it might be a good thing if he did. As far as I am personally concerned, no amount of Tom Stanniforths or Acts of Parliament could help me. I am a failure, Meg; and, what is worse, I have made myself into a ludicrous failure. Do you know that for some time I was strongly tempted to disappear and never let you hear of me again?"

"Oh, Philip!"

"But I thought better of it, you see. The prodigal, you know, thought better of it when his money was all gone, and it came to be a case of husks or starvation. But I don't suppose that he put things to himself in that coarse way. I should imagine, judging from analogy,

that what he said to himself was something more like this: 'What an ungrateful brute I am! Here have I been receiving every imaginable kindness all my life, and scarcely troubling myself to say thank you for it, thinking of nothing and caring for nothing but my own gratification—and now I have my reward! I am ashamed of myself and disgusted with myself. I can't undo the past; but I will go home and cry *peccavi*; and then, if my father chooses to turn me out of doors, let him do it. I shall not complain.' So he packs his portemanteau, and pays his hotel bill, and off he goes to the station without saying a word to anybody, and—and—here he is, wishing very much to make a clean breast of it, but in oh! such an awful funk that he doesn't know how to begin."

"Am I so formidable?" said Margaret, smiling and giving Philip's hand an encouraging squeeze. "My dear boy, if you have anything unpleasant to tell me, tell it me at once; and don't think that I shall scold you. I am a great deal too bad myself to condemn my neighbours. The only way in which you could really pain me would be to conceal your troubles from me; and that you have never done in your life."

"Ah, Meg; it is just what I have done. I don't want to make excuses for myself; but I can't help thinking that it is more difficult to me to be honest than to most people. Walter, now, couldn't tell a lie to save his life: if he did, he would get so red and look so guilty that it wouldn't be of the slightest service to him. But I don't suffer in that way. I can tell a lie with the utmost facility; and that, I suppose, is why I have been telling you lies of a more or less direct kind ever since I can remember."

"Oh, don't say that!" exclaimed Margaret.

"You had better not tempt me," answered Philip, with a rather bitter laugh, "or I may take you at your word. My poor, dear old Meg, I could go on throwing dust in your eyes to the end of the chapter; but I won't. I want to turn over a new leaf—upon my soul and honour, I do! Only, before I can do that, I must swallow a dose of nauseous physic; and if you only knew how I hate the idea of raising it to my lips, you would beware of interrupting me. Now, don't say a word; I am going to drink." Philip made a gulp and a grimace, and then said, very quickly: "What Kenyon told you was true. I was married for rather more than a year; and all last winter I lived with my wife in Conduit Street, where she died only a few months ago. She was a girl from a pastrycook's shop in Oxford."

Margaret turned very white; but she did not remove her hand from Philip's shoulder, where she had laid it when she sat down beside him on the sofa.

"Oh, how did it happen?" she exclaimed. "I am sure it was all her fault."

In the midst of all his discomfort and humiliation Philip could not repress a short laugh. "No, it was not her fault," he answered. "She

was as good a little woman as ever breathed; and—well, I was very fond of her."

"Fonder than of Nellie?" asked Margaret hastily.

"No; not nearly so fond. At least, I believe not—I can't tell. Will you have the whole truth? *I don't remember.* Oh, dear me!" exclaimed Philip, bursting out laughing, "when I do go in for telling the truth, I believe there's no one like me. I wonder how many men there are living in this world of weathercocks who would have dared to say such a thing as that!"

It certainly was not very wise to say such things to Margaret. She tried to look as if she was not pained and shocked, but made an indifferent success of the attempt.

"I don't wonder that you did not let me know about it at first," she said. "Of course you *could* not let me know, and it is not telling an untruth to remain silent. Perhaps, for everybody's sake, it was kinder to remain silent for a time. I can see how it was; you intended to enlighten me, and then you put off, and put off, as one does. Wasn't that it?"

"I was having her educated and made presentable," answered Philip. He perfectly understood that Margaret was arguing with herself quite as much as she was making excuses for him; and it did not appear to him that she was likely to get the best of the argument. He would almost rather have been reproached a little.

"Poor thing!" Margaret said presently.

"Yes, you may say 'Poor thing!' now, without a mental reservation. I wonder how it would have been had she been still living, and I had brought her down here to introduce her to you. She used to talk about 'beyaviour;' and if Mrs. Winnington had snubbed her, it is more than probable that she would have burst out crying in public. Would you have said, 'Poor thing!' then? No; you would have said, 'Vulgar little wretch!'"

"I hope I should not."

"Wouldn't you? You would have thought it, though; and so should I, perhaps. I was awfully unhappy when I thought that she was going to die; I don't know when I have been so unhappy in my life. But as soon as she was gone I began to see that whatever is is right. Tell me now—because I should like to know what you really think about it—was that human nature, or was it only *my* nature?"

"Oh, don't!" exclaimed Margaret. She did not at all understand Philip's whimsical pleasure in sneering at himself; nor could she guess that it was in this manner that he was accustomed to answer conscience and still the pangs of remorse.

There was a long silence, which Margaret broke by asking, "Was hers a sudden death?"

And then Philip, taking up a different tone, related how he had lost first his baby, and afterwards his wife, and spoke upon both subjects

with so much real feeling that he was quite forgiven long before he had ceased.

"I suppose you have not told Nellie anything about this yet?" said Margaret.

"Gracious goodness! no. Must I confess my sins to more than one person?"

"But, Philip, I don't think that there has been any sin. You have said the worst of yourself that possibly could be said; and I feel sure that, if you had chosen, you might have made things sound very differently. One cannot call it wrong to make a foolish marriage."

"In my case, perhaps, hereditary instincts may be pleaded as an extenuation of the offence."

"Only I do think it would be wrong to conceal it from Nellie. If she loves you, she will certainly pardon you; but it might not be so easy for her to forgive, if she were to hear the story from somebody else."

"Such as that admirable creature Colonel Kenyon, for instance. I'll tell her then; though I verily believe that, if I take many more steps in the path of righteousness, my hair will turn white in a single night, as Bonivard's didn't."

"At all events," said Margaret cheerfully, "you have got through your confession in one quarter; and you see it has not been so very terrible, after all."

"Oh, but excuse me; I haven't got through it. The worst is still to come."

"The worst!" echoed Margaret in dismay.

Philip nodded. "I told you about my friend Signora Tommasini, didn't I?"

"Yes—well?—oh, you surely cannot mean——"

"That I have married Signora Tommasini?" asked Philip, going off into a peal of laughter; for Margaret's face of consternation tickled him irresistibly. "No; it isn't quite so bad as that. It's bad enough, though," he added, becoming suddenly sobered; "I owe her a lot of money."

Margaret drew a long breath. "If that is all!——" said she.

"Oh! that is all. You don't know how much it is, though."

"However much it may be, we will manage to pay her," said Margaret briskly.

"This is dreadful! Why don't you call me names? Why do you heap coals of fire upon my head? It's—well, it's five thousand pounds."

Philip was staring intently at the ground when he made this startling disclosure, and he consequently did not see how Margaret's face fell. Her voice was quite steady and cheerful as she answered:—

"Five thousand pounds will not ruin me. But how did you—— Never mind, though, if you would rather not tell me. It is of no consequence."

"Meg, you are too good for this wicked world. Of course I will tell you. It isn't very creditable, but you will hardly expect it to be that. I took to gambling for a time—Heaven knows why ; I don't!—and I had a run of the most fearful luck ; and the long and short of it was that I found myself all that sum to the bad, and I couldn't pay. The woman tempted me, and—I mean this good Signora Tommasini, who is very nearly as foolish as you are, offered to save me from disgrace and ruin, and I wasn't so rude as to make her speak twice before I replied. She said I was to pay her back when I became a great singer and was earning a great salary ; but——"

"You could not remain under such an obligation to a stranger," interrupted Margaret quickly.

"Ah ! there it is. And yet I must be under an obligation to somebody."

"There can be no question of obligations between us, Philip. I simply do for you what you would do for me if our positions were reversed. I only wish you had applied to me, instead of to her, in the first instance. But it was very kind of her. I think I should like to know that Signora Tommasini."

"I am not quite sure that you would ; she is hardly in your line. But she is a dear, good old thing, all the same ; and she has never breathed a syllable about repayment, though I dare say she wants the money as much as anybody else. The first thing that I thought of when I read those useless signatures in the register at Sant' Onofrio was that I should be able to wipe out my debt ; but that was not to be, and ever since then I have been unable to sleep at nights for thinking of it."

"Why did you not write and tell me ?" asked Margaret reproachfully. "You ought to have known that I should never think twice about giving you anything that you wanted, so long as I had it to give."

"I did know it ; but it was a case of robbing Peter to pay Paul, you see ; and, little as you might suppose it, Meg, I have still some feelings of shame left. I couldn't bring myself to ask you for more money ; so I lay awake, and brooded over my sins. I suppose that nobody can come to a realising sense of what a sinner he is until he takes to lying awake at nights. It was that lying awake that showed me how abominably I had behaved to you, and how I had deceived you ; and at last I could stand it no longer. I resolved that I would strike while the iron was hot, come straight home, and tell you all about—about the other thing, you know. And, having resolved upon that, it seemed best to make a full confession of everything—as I have done."

Thus far, as regarded essentials, Philip's veracity had been unimpeachable ; but he had been guilty of a slight suppression of truth in attributing his hurried departure from Florence to the stings of an awakened

conscience alone. His suspicions with regard to the Signora had deepened into something very like certainty as the days had gone on. He had found himself falling more and more under her sway. Her good-humoured, authoritative trick of ordering him to do this and that had extended itself to matters of the smallest detail, and, favoured by his indolence as well as by his sense of obligation, had reached such a pitch that at last he felt that he could hardly call his soul his own. It seemed to him that he was in some sense the Signora's property, and she treated him as if he were so in every sense. Matters came to a climax one evening when he was driving back from the theatre with her, and when she asked him in so many words whether he did not think that it was much better for some men to marry women older than themselves. The wretched Philip stammered out an incoherent reply, shrank back into his corner of the carriage in mortal terror, and, as soon as he reached the hotel, rushed upstairs, packed his belongings, and fled the country precipitately. Such alarm may seem a little exaggerated, but probably Philip understood the danger of the situation better than anybody else could do. He believed that the Signora was capable of ordering him to marry her, and he knew that, under sufficient stress, he was capable of consenting to anything.

The wisdom of the step which he had taken was at any rate amply justified by the event, when he found himself sitting, with all his sins confessed and forgiven, and his troubles as good as over. Margaret's pardon had been so readily accorded that he was encouraged to hope well of his approaching interview with Nellie, albeit much disinclined to walk over to Broom Leas forthwith, as he was urged to do.

"Mightn't I have a night's rest first?" he pleaded.

"You will rest so much better when you have done your duty. Why put off till to-morrow what might be done to-day?"

"Why do to-day what might be put off till to-morrow? However, if I must, I must."

Philip got up, sighed, and moved towards the door; but before he reached it, it was thrown open, and Miss Brune herself walked in.

Margaret and Philip exchanged quick glances of dismay; but the former was equal to the occasion. She stepped forward, and kissed Nellie, who had stopped short, with a cry of surprise, on recognising the new arrival, and—"Here is somebody," said she, "whom you would rather see than me, I think. I have some letters to write, and I am going to the drawing-room to write them. You can send for me when you want me—or I should rather say *if* you want me."

But Nellie had seized Margaret by the arm, and retained a firm grip of it. "Please do not go away, Mrs. Stanniforth," she said. "It was to see you that I came. I have had some very disagreeable news."

And then she looked pointedly at Philip, with whom she had not shaken hands, and who promptly made a move in the direction of the

door. "I'll go," he said; "only will you tell me one thing first: does this disagreeable news relate in any way to me?"

Nellie turned her eyes upon him. He did not look at all like a whipped hound, as he ought to have done. His face wore a slight smile, a faint expression of curiosity, which may have been genuine or assumed, but which in either case would have sufficed to harden her heart against him. "Yes, it does," she answered shortly.

Margaret glanced apprehensively from one to the other, and caught the girl by both hands. "Oh, Nellie!" she exclaimed, "I think we know it all already. It's about somebody who—who is dead, is it not? And Philip has come back on purpose to tell you everything, and to say how sorry he is. You won't judge him until you have heard him, will you?"

"He can have nothing to say that I should care to hear," answered Nellie; "and I dare say he will be glad that somebody else has spared him the trouble of an explanation."

"I have my dear friend Colonel Kenyon to thank for this," muttered Philip.

"It was Walter who wrote to me," said Nellie, "if that makes any difference. I came here to tell Mrs. Stanniforth that of course our engagement must be at an end. There is nothing more to be said that I know of."

But Margaret thought that there was a great deal more to be said. "Dear Nellie," she began, "don't be hasty. It is quite natural that you should be angry——"

"I am not angry at all; it is not worth being angry about," declared Nellie, who was very angry indeed. "I am glad I found out in time, that is all."

"He was just going to Broom Leas to tell you."

"Because he could not help himself. He told you why he had gone to Florence when he could not conceal it any longer."

"That has all come to nothing," said Margaret quickly.

"Of course it has come to nothing; I did not believe the story for a moment. And now the engagement to which I ought never to have consented has come to nothing too. I hope I shall never hear the subject mentioned again in my life."

Margaret was still holding Nellie's hands, as if in that way she could obtain control over a will stronger than her own. She threw an imploring glance at Philip, who was leaning back against the mantelpiece, with his hands in his pockets, and who merely raised his eyebrows, drew down the corners of his mouth, and shrugged his shoulders in answer to her appeal. It was evident that he had no intention of fighting his own battle; so she had to go on fighting it for him.

"Nellie," she pleaded, "we must all forgive sometimes. I know you have a great deal to forgive; but for your own sake, as well as his, you must try."

"Oh," answered Nellie, with a short laugh, "I shall be able to forgive him without trying very much. There are some people to whom one forgives anything and everything, because——"

"Because one loves them," broke in Margaret eagerly.

"No; because—— But I won't say what I was going to say; and I won't pretend that I can quite forgive Philip yet. It is not so easy to forgive an insult as an injury. If only I can avoid seeing him for a few months, I have no doubt I shall be able to like him again as well as I ever did."

"Oh, Nellie!" murmured Margaret, with her eyes full of tears.

"Dear Mrs. Stanniforth, don't cry!" exclaimed the girl, softening suddenly; "he is not worth it—I mean we are not worth it; and I can't bear to hurt you. I haven't been quite honest about this; I should have broken off the engagement in any case. Perhaps, as you say, I should have forgiven Philip at once, if I had loved him; but I don't love him, and I never have. I did try—no one knows how I tried—but I was perfectly miserable the whole time; and it was such a relief when he went away! I knew then that I never could really marry him; and I suppose that I ought to have said so. This morning when Walter's letter came, I felt as if I had been reprieved from a sentence of death. You see how impossible it would have been for me to do as you wished."

This was not very pleasant hearing for our irresistible friend in the background, who had been a great deal more mortified and crestfallen throughout than he had chosen to appear.

"After that," said he, "I think the best thing I can do is to retire gracefully." And he was out of the room before Margaret could say a word to stop him.

"How glad I am he is gone!" exclaimed Nellie.

But Margaret sighed, "Poor Philip! oh, *poor* fellow! It was cruel of you to speak of him like that when he was still in the room."

To this Nellie made no reply; and indeed it must be confessed that, during the remainder of the interview between the two ladies, the younger displayed a great deal more forbearance than did the elder. To be magnanimous was, perhaps, easier for Nellie, who had an excellent case, than for Margaret, who had no case at all; but it is somewhat trying to a proud and quick-tempered girl that her magnanimity should meet with no recognition. More than once Nellie was upon the point of making a sharp retort; but she bit her lips and kept silence, knowing how severe was the disappointment which had fallen upon the kindest of her friends, and feeling that her own conduct in this matter had not been quite as straightforward as it might have been.

"What can I say?" she exclaimed at length. "I think Philip insulted me by coming straight down here from his wife's deathbed, and asking me to marry him; I suppose anybody would consider that an insult. But I don't want to convince you that he has behaved badly;

and I'm afraid you can't convince me that he has not. The best way is to say no more about it. Even if Philip had been able to prove to us that all this was a calumny, and that he had never had a wife, I still could not have married him. I understand now that I never could have cared for him as one ought to care for one's husband."

"It is rather hard upon him that you should not have found that out before you accepted him," said Margaret.

Nellie did not remind her critic of the doubts which had been made light of in that very room at the time alluded to, nor did she quote certain words of Margaret's which remained very vividly in her memory. "I am quite willing to take my share of the blame, if there is to be any blame," she said humbly; "but if I had consulted you, you could not have advised me to do anything else than break off the engagement, now that I know for certain that I don't love him."

This was unanswerable, and Margaret felt it to be so; yet she was not altogether silenced. She went on fighting, though she knew that the battle was lost; and Nellie listened patiently and sadly. There came a moment when the two women were very near quarrelling for the first time in their lives; but that passed away. One of them was too sweet-tempered to allow matters to come to such extremities, and the other was too keenly alive to the pity of their falling out over so unworthy an object. They parted at last with tears and embraces, but with a cloud between them of which both were conscious.

The cause of the strife, meanwhile, was walking about the garden, trying to pluck up his spirits, which declined to answer to the spur. He could not brave the thing out. If Nellie had wished to punish him, she had discovered the right way to do so. The loss of her love was a real misfortune to him, but for the moment the loss of her respect seemed an infinitely greater one. It had often happened to him to speak and think of himself contemptuously; but that was a very different thing from hearing himself contemptuously spoken of by others. Nellie had told him in the plainest of language that she despised him; and he could not help seeing that Margaret, without being herself in the least aware of it, despised him too. He had no feeling of anger against either one of them; but he did feel exceedingly uncomfortable and horribly humiliated. Under the circumstances, there was but one thing to be done: he must get away with all possible despatch from the scene of such painful experiences. He would go up to London, he thought, and place himself in Steinberger's hands once more, and court oblivion; which, to be sure, never needed much wooing on his part. And then he thought of the five thousand pounds which he would soon be able to pay to Signora Tommasini's bankers, and that consoled him a little.

After a long time Margaret came out of the house with red eyes, and walked quickly across the grass towards him.

"Well, Meg," he said smiling, as he passed his arm through hers,

"so it's all over. Confession made, but absolution deferred; isn't that the way Mr. Langley would put it?"

"You know that if you needed any absolution from me, you had it at the first moment," she answered; "but that is not what you want, my poor boy. It is not against me that you have offended—if you have offended. And I can do nothing for you."

"Do you call five thousand pounds nothing?"

"Oh, that," said Margaret, who had entirely forgotten this trifling detail in the more serious trouble that had overtaken them both, "that is easily provided. But, Philip dear, I can give you no hope about Nellie. I have done all that I could do, and it has been quite useless. I am so very, very sorry."

"What a dear old thing you are! But you mustn't be sorry, Meg; it can't be helped. It is a bitter pill; let us swallow it down and make no faces."

"It seems heartless to try and comfort you," said Margaret presently; "still there always is comfort—for a man. You will find interests in the world—occupations—plenty of things to divert your thoughts from the one subject."

"I think it quite possible that I may," answered Philip gravely. "And I must really be setting to work again in earnest now," he added, after a pause.

"At the law, do you mean?"

"I am afraid it would be a long time before Hobson and Jobson would give me a brief. No; I have only the one talent, and I must not bury it. Duty points to London and Herr Steinberger and scales, Meg."

"But you told me that you really did not like the idea of going on the stage," objected Margaret, looking up at him with eyes full of pity.

"I am not sure that I do like it; but I intend heroically to lump it. I don't know what Steinberger will say to me, I'm sure; but I haven't altogether wasted my time at Florence, and perhaps he may allow me to try my wings by a little preliminary flight before the season is over. Anyhow, I ought not to put off seeing him any longer than I can help. Do you still rise with the lark to attend divine service, Meg? If you do, you may catch a glimpse of me before I start to-morrow morning."

"Couldn't you stay just a few days with me, Philip?"

"Do you think it would be wise? When one has been kicked downstairs, one looks rather foolish if one persists in sitting upon the doorstep."

"I wish you would not say such things. You have not been treated in that way at all."

"Not by you; but I have been kicked, all the same; and I feel uncommonly foolish. I really couldn't stay here, Meg. If there were nothing else to drive me away, the commiseration of Mrs. Prosser

would be enough in itself. Give a man time to recover his self-conceit a little."

"It is just possible," said Margaret after a few minutes, "that I may not be here myself much longer. I am rather thinking of letting Longbourne for a time."

"Letting Longbourne!" ejaculated Philip. "Since when have you taken that notion into your head?"

"Oh, I have been thinking of it for a long time. I really want a change, and——"

"Meg, I don't believe a word of it!" exclaimed Philip, interrupting her. "You never dreamt of letting Longbourne before this afternoon; and you want to cut down so as to be able to find me that money. But I'm not going to take it. Merciful heavens! I am not quite such a despicable fellow as that yet—whatever Nellie may think of me. I may have earned as much as that for myself before another year is out—who knows? But I'd rather go to the Jews for it than that you should be deprived of a single comfort."

"Pray, pray don't do that, Philip!" cried Margaret in great alarm. "I don't know much about money-lenders, but everybody says that when once you get into their hands, you are never free again. Promise me that, whatever happens, you will have nothing to do with them!"

"All right," answered Philip, laughing; "I'll promise. The more willingly as I very much doubt whether they would have anything to do with me."

Thus reassured, Margaret was able to join in his laughter, and to add: "Your self-conceit, as you call it, must be coming back to you already if you think I am going to cut down my establishment to pay your debts. What is five thousand pounds to me? Nothing! I want to get away from Longbourne for many reasons. It is lonely now, and I am tired of it; and my mother is ill again, and will have to spend the summer in Germany most likely. Perhaps I shall join her there. Altogether, I don't know when I may have so good an opportunity again for escaping from all my chains for a time."

If this pious fraud was confessed to Mr. Langley on the following day, it may be hoped that he was not too hard upon its perpetrator. To raise a sum of five thousand pounds, over and above her current expenses, would have been at this time as impossible a feat for Margaret as for Philip himself to perform. She was indeed able to hand over a cheque for the required amount; but, having done so, it would have been out of her power to continue her present rate of living without considerably overdrawing her account before the end of the quarter. The only solution that suggested itself to her was to strike out the item of personal expenditure altogether from the budget; and no sooner had she seen Philip drive away from the door with his cheque in his pocket, than she took prompt measures to carry out this plan. She gave orders to the astonished Prosser to pay off and dismiss her staff of underlings

forthwith; she wrote the necessary instructions to the house-agents in London; and then set out, with a light heart, to walk down to the Rectory, having a certain proposition to make which she had reason to hope would be favourably looked upon there.

CHAPTER XXX.

A FIASCO.

THE hall table of the little house in Park Street was almost concealed beneath the shoal of cards and notes that were laid upon it every day, for Mrs. Winnington had never in her life let slip an opportunity of making a useful acquaintance, and was unwearied in her pursuit of such acquaintances when made. It may seem somewhat strange, therefore, that Edith, who could have procured half a dozen invitations to balls for Walter in the course of a week, should have put herself to considerable pains to get him asked to a private concert, a class of entertainment which affords few facilities for uninterrupted conversation. Edith, however, had her reasons for adopting this course. She wanted very much to meet Walter again, but she did not at all want to meet him in such a manner as she had done at Travers House. He frightened her with his downright ways; she saw that, if he were to find himself for five minutes alone with her, he would infallibly make a demand to which she could return but one answer, and that then he would go away in a huff, and the breach between them would be complete. But at Lady Cecilia Carroll's she would be able to talk to him with a pleasant feeling of security against any foolish outbreak on his part.

Lady Cecilia's concerts were rather solemn functions. "A concert," that lady was wont to say, "should be a concert. I don't ask people to my house to chatter and giggle, and sit on the stairs, and talk through the songs. What I wish is to give them an opportunity of hearing the best music and the best singers in a comfortable room with comfortable chairs in it. I only ask those who understand music; and not many of them, for I won't have a crowd." The boast was not always a truthful one, for it is certain that a large proportion of the favoured guests knew no more of music than they did of the Chinese language; but that part of it which related to the comfort of the rooms and the excellence of the performers was justified by facts, and Lady Cecilia's invitations were always eagerly sought after—perhaps because it is a part of human nature to desire anything that is difficult to obtain; perhaps because, as she herself would say, with a sardonic grin, "People will go a long way to hear for nothing what they would have to pay two or three guineas to hear elsewhere."

Walter, who very excusably thought that a private concert and a musical party meant much the same thing, and who had found out that

punctuality is not practised in London society, arrived rather late on the evening to which he had been looking forward with so much anxiety, and was surprised to find that he would not be permitted to enter the room in which the company were assembled before the conclusion of a fantasia upon the harp, of which the subdued tinkling could be heard through closed doors. He waited outside, at the top of the staircase, in company with some other tardy guests, until the doors were thrown open, and then entered a long, dimly-lighted room full of people, who had very much the appearance of being in church. They were seated, with their backs turned towards him, upon rows of arm-chairs; and at the far end of the room was a sort of stage, occupied at present by a grand piano, a harp, and a fat little harpist.

Walter did not know Lady Cecilia when he saw her, and, as nobody advanced to welcome him, he presumed that he did not see her now; but he soon descried what interested him a good deal more, namely, the back of Edith's head some few yards away from him. The poor people who had been forced to sit still and silent for the last ten minutes were indemnifying themselves now by moving about and talking their loudest. Walter pushed his way through them with the ease which a man of his inches and breadth of chest could command, and perceiving to his great joy an empty chair beside Edith's, unhesitatingly took possession of it.

"Oh! you have come?" said she, allowing him to hold the tips of her fingers for a moment.

"Of course I have come. You asked me, didn't you?"

"It was Lady Cecilia who asked you, I suppose. But I am glad you have come, because it is such a good concert."

"There was 'E. W.' in the corner of the envelope, at all events," said Walter. "So it's a good concert, is it? I don't know much about music myself; but——"

"*Hush!*" interrupted Edith in an agony; for, indeed, Tom Stanniforth was standing close by, and Walter's voice was a loud one.

"Why, what's the matter?" asked the astonished culprit. "Have I said anything awful?"

"Yes; you mustn't say you don't know anything about music. Everybody is supposed to like music in this house."

"Oh, all right! I'm glad you told me. I should like anything so long as I was allowed to sit here. It was awfully good of you to keep a place for me."

"Oh, I couldn't have done that! but you can stay here for a little; it is somebody else's place."

"Then somebody else must drag me out by the collar of my coat if he wants his place again. Oh! how do you do, Lady Travers?"

"You are very kind to notice me," said Lady Travers. "Perhaps, in order to avoid the scandal of the police being called in, I had better give you *my* place." And she rose as she spoke.

"Oh, but, Lady Travers, upon my word!—I couldn't think of such

a thing. I was only joking, I assure you," protested Walter, quite shocked.

"If you are really sure that you were only joking, perhaps I may venture to return," said she; "but in the meantime you may as well keep my chair for me. I want to speak to some one on the other side of the room."

Walter took her at her word; and the first thing that he did, after having effected this change of position, was to whisper to Edith, "And who is Somebody Else?"

"Let me see—who was it? Mr. Stanniforth, I think," she answered, somewhat disingenuously.

Now, in days gone by, Walter had guessed enough of Mrs. Winnington's designs to be aware that Tom Stanniforth was a more or less dangerous person; therefore his brow clouded over at this careless announcement. But he remembered his promise to Lady Travers, and only said, "I should like to see Mr. Stanniforth again. He was a very good fellow."

"Yes; I think he is very nice," Edith agreed hurriedly. "Have you heard from home lately?"

"I had a letter from Nell the other day. She says it is dull work down there now that we are all scattered to the four corners of the earth, and only she and my father are left to count the empty places. I suppose we shall never be all together again as we were in the old days. Jolly old days—oh, dear!"

"I suppose you miss the cricket, and all that?"

"Exactly so—the cricket and all that. Do *you* ever think of old times now? The new times are better fun for you, aren't they?"

Edith sighed and looked down at her fan, upon which was represented a group of impossibly-costumed shepherds and shepherdesses dancing. It was a *chef-d'œuvre*, painted upon parchment, and signed by Watteau himself.

"What a pretty old fan!" said Walter, admiring the work of art, without suspecting its value. "Where did you pick it up?"

"I don't know. That is, Mr. Stanniforth gave it to me."

"Mr. Stanniforth! What the dev--ahem! Is it true that ladies accept all kinds of presents from men nowadays?"

"I'm sure I don't know. One can't very well refuse things if one's friends take the trouble to ransack the curiosity-shops for them. I don't care for *rococo* fans myself, and I should like to hand this one over to Kate, who does; only I suppose that would look rather ungrateful. Oh! they are going to begin again. How much pleasanter concerts would be if the music could be left out! We mustn't talk any more now."

"Why, I haven't said a word to you yet!" exclaimed Walter in dismay. "You don't mean to say that Lady Travers is coming back!"

"No; she is sitting down over there. What is it going to be now?"

Not another instrumental performance, I hope and trust. We have had the harp; that's one comfort."

"And are the flute, sackbut, and psaltery to follow?" asked Walter, glancing over Edith's shoulder at the programme which she held. "No, —'duo, Signora Tommasini and Signor M.' Who's Signor M., I wonder?"

Edith, who had raised her eyes to the dais at the end of the room, was in a position to answer the question. "Oh, Walter, look!" she exclaimed in astonished accents.

Walter looked, and gave vent to a low whistle. "By Jupiter!" he ejaculated under his breath. "Who would have thought of his turning up like this? I wouldn't have written that letter if I hadn't supposed he was safe in Italy. Here's a pretty kettle of fish!"

But he gave no explanation of these mutterings in answer to Edith's inquiring glance, and they both turned their eyes towards Philip, standing with a roll of music in his hand beside Signora Tommasini, who was all ablaze with diamonds. It was Philip's first appearance in a professional capacity; it was the first occasion on which he was to exhibit his talents and gifts to an audience in consideration of something more substantial than applause; and this loss of freedom may perhaps have deprived him of the self-confidence which is so essential to success; for in one sense it is easier and far pleasanter to give away one's possessions than to sell them. Be that as it may, he was visibly nervous. His hands shook a little, his cheeks were rather pale, and he looked as if he would have liked very much to run away.

But Steinberger, with his legs tucked under his music stool, was already punishing the piano; the Signora had kicked out her train, hoisted up her fat shoulders, and distorted her features into that extraordinary grin which, for some inscrutable reason, is held to be indispensable by all public singers; and Signor M. had to take up his allotted burden and trudge, whether he would or no.

He had still a few minutes in which to recover himself. First, Signora Tommasini went through some astonishing vocal exploits—"letting off a lot of fireworks," as the ignorant Walter said; then the two voices blended harmoniously together for some bars; and then came the trying moment when Philip had to interpret Donizetti alone and unaided. It was no very formidable achievement that was required of him; but there was a certain high note which would have to come out before he had done; and Philip felt an awful and sickening conviction that come out it would not. And, sure enough, it did not. There was an instant's pause, during which the singer suffered the condensed agonies of a lifetime; then, in despair, he expanded his lungs, and out came a note which was loud enough and clear enough for anybody, but which, alas! was not *the* note.

A quickly-repressed shudder shook the Signora's whole person; Steinberger made a horrible face, bent over the keys, lifted his great

hands above his head, and brought them down with a crash-bang which drowned all subsequent deficiencies, and the performance came to an end without further hitch.

Probably not more than one per cent. of the audience knew that anything had gone wrong. The young *débutant* had had a momentary difficulty, but he had surmounted it at once; and his acquaintances, of whom there were a great many among the company, were quite ready to congratulate him upon his success. But a very different verdict was given by those whose approval was of more importance.

"*Gott in Himmel!* it was the yell of a wild beast!" shouted Steinberger, who was in a furious passion. "Make such another exhibition of yourself, and I wash my hands of you. What have I always told you? Why must you run off to Italy, and ruin your voice by exerting it too soon? You are a hundred—tousand times worse now as you were last year!"

But Philip, apparently unmoved, laughed, remarked "Better luck next time," and strolled down into the room, where Edith was saying to Walter, "Hasn't he improved wonderfully? I had no idea he could sing like that. Do you think he saw us?"

"I hope not," answered Walter.

"Why do you hope not? I thought you and he used to be such friends."

But Walter was not put to the necessity of explaining himself, for the words had hardly passed Edith's lips before Philip was shaking hands with her.

"So you have come to hear my lamentable breakdown," said he.

"What do you mean?" Edith asked, in all sincerity. "I thought you sang splendidly."

"I wonder whether you say that out of politeness, or whether your ears were really not pierced by that awful sharp note. No one can have suffered more acutely from it than I did myself, if that's any consolation. Well, Walter, old man, how are you? Here I am back again, you see, and all the worse for my journey, Steinberger tells me. I didn't know you had gone in for frequenting the gay world."

If Philip had been nervous upon the stage, when there was really no reason for his being so, he was quite at his ease now, and did not seem to think that any of the events which had taken place since Walter and he had parted need produce a coolness between them. "How are things in the City?" he went on. "Old What's-his-name hasn't died and left you all his money while I've been away, has he?"

"No; he's all right," answered Walter, who, for his part, was very obviously embarrassed and uncomfortable. "Have you only just returned? I suppose you haven't been to Longbourne yet? I just want to speak to somebody for a minute. Back directly." And Walter turned tail and fled; nor did he return to Edith's side until he had satisfied himself that Philip was at a safe distance.

"Never felt so small in my life," he declared, speaking afterwards of his behaviour upon this occasion. "Knowing that, only a few days before, I had sent off a letter robbing him of his character behind his back, I couldn't sit there and pretend to be as good friends with him as ever. Nobody could. I simply had to make a bolt for it."

Meanwhile Philip, who had perfectly understood the meaning of Walter's abrupt retreat, and was not a little amused by it, had taken possession of his friend's vacant place, and was making polite inquiries after Mrs. Winnington.

"Meg tells me she is down with the gout again," he said. "You really ought to impress upon her the duty of taking more care of herself, for all our sakes."

"You have been to Longbourne, then," said Edith. "Of course you saw Nellie."

"I did. I may as well tell you that all is over between Nellie and me. Don't try to look distressed. You know that you think, as everybody else does, except Meg, that she is well rid of me. At the same time, if you feel disposed to admire my fortitude, I don't forbid you to do so. In me, Edith, you see that sublime spectacle, a good man struggling with adversity. By a most unkind freak of fortune, I have failed to establish my right to call myself Brune, and I am by no means clear that I have not lost my old name in the attempt. I return home in broken spirits to be told by Nellie that, upon further consideration, she finds that she never cared a brass farthing for me. I come up to London, and make a hideous fiasco of my first public appearance. It now only remains for me to be robbed and murdered on my way back to my lonely lodging to-night, and the tale of woe will be complete."

"But is this really true, Philip? About Nellie, I mean."

"It is too true. I am assuming a light tone, you will understand, in order to conceal a deep emotion. That also is true, though you don't believe it. Ah, well; let us talk about something else. Here comes Mr. Stanniforth, looking the benevolent legislator all over. I wonder whether he could be induced to hatch a scheme for the sustenance of unsuccessful public singers at the national expense."

Tom Stanniforth greeted Marescalchi with all the cordiality that could have been expected of him, and with considerably more than he felt. He said: "Everybody is prophesying a great career for you. They tell me that we shall be hearing you at Covent Garden before this time next year."

"Everybody is very kind," answered Philip; "but it is a mistake to prophesy, and especially to fix dates. You can't go far wrong if you foretell that the world is coming to an end; but if you say it will come to an end in 1881, people don't think much of you in 1882. I only wish I were as sure of singing at Covent Garden some day as you are of being returned for Blackport at the next general election; but even that isn't an absolute certainty, I suppose. Haven't you been pro-

posing to lock up all habitual drunkards, or something of that sort! Some of your constituents must look upon that as a rather uncalled-for interference with the amusements of the sovereign people, I should think."

"That young man is—what shall I say?—not very far removed from a conceited young puppy," remarked Mr. Stanniforth, with unusual severity, as Philip lounged away. For the truth was that the Habitual Drunkards Bill had been very coldly looked upon both at Blackport and in the House of Commons.

"Don't be too hard upon him," said Edith; "he has had a great deal of disappointment lately, and I don't think he is at all satisfied with the way he sang to-night."

"Then," said Tom, who perhaps would have been more mollified if he could have conjectured the nature of the disappointment alluded to, "he may do. If he is dissatisfied with himself, there is hope for him. Hitherto, I fancy, he has rather come to grief from just the opposite cause. It is very good of you to stick up for him, though," he added.

"Oh, very," said Edith, laughing. And then Lady Travers came back, and asked what had become of Walter.

Poor Walter, who had been watching his love from afar, was at this moment making his way back towards her in the hope of regaining possession of the chair in which Lady Travers had just sat down. She did not offer to cede it to him a second time when he approached, nor did Mr. Stanniforth display any inclination to move; so, as he could not remain where he was, without standing upon the toes of the people behind him, he was presently forced to retreat to the doorway, where he spent the rest of the evening in a rueful mood.

A dishevelled violinist was in possession of the *daïs*, and continued in possession of it for a very long time. Then Philip again came forward, and sang a pathetic ballad with much effect, and shortly after that the proceedings terminated. By dint of determination and some exertion of physical force, Walter managed to be on the doorstep at the right moment to help Edith into her carriage; but that was all he got out of the opportunity which had been provided for him with so much forethought, and of which he had hoped such great things. Taking it altogether, it had hardly been a successful evening; and perhaps the only one of our friends who had thoroughly enjoyed it was Tom Stanniforth. He, having had a long talk with Edith during the latter part of the time, had found her so amiable and kind that he really began to think he might be falling in love with her at last; and said to himself that, in any case, he would not much longer postpone the offer which he had now quite determined to make.

Tom Stanniforth was so much a man of business that, when he had formed a clear intention, he was uneasy until he had executed it. In this matter of his marriage he had shilly-shallied an unconscionably long

time, because he had not felt perfectly sure of his own wishes ; but now it seemed to him that he had done all that was necessary in the way of preliminaries, and that it would be well to get the whole business settled and done with, so that he might be able to devote his whole mind to habitual drunkenness for the remainder of the session.

So the very next morning he betook himself to Park Street ; and his air, as he marched into the little drawing-room, was so plainly that of a man with a purpose, that Edith knew quite well what had brought him there before he opened his lips.

As soon as he had made the inquiries which politeness demanded, and had expressed his grief at hearing that Mrs. Winnington was still in a good deal of pain, he wasted no more time in beating about the bush, but went straight to the point.

"I don't know whether you have guessed what has made me call at this unusual hour, Miss Winnington."

Miss Winnington couldn't imagine.

"Well, I came because I hoped to find you alone, and because I wanted to speak to you upon a subject of great importance—of great importance to me, I mean. I think you must know already what my wishes are, and sometimes I have ventured to hope that you might not consider me too old and ugly to make a passable husband. I certainly have no reason to flatter myself that you are what is called in love with me ; but the longer I live the more I become convinced that happy marriages do not depend upon there being love on both sides."

"You think there ought to be love on one side, then?"

Mr. Stanniforth, whose countenance wore the smiling and complacent expression which it was wont to assume in the House of Commons after he had disposed of a difficulty, replied that he would not go so far as to assert even that. Which rather took the wind out of Edith's sails.

"You look very much pleased with yourself," she was provoked into exclaiming. "Are you much in the habit of proposing to people, that you know so well how to put your case?"

"I suppose no man has had less practice at that kind of thing than I have," answered Tom, still radiant. For, indeed, it seemed to him that he had put the case very neatly and concisely.

"Have you never proposed to anybody before?"

Mr. Stanniforth made no answer, but looked down and smiled, as if he thought the question was hardly a fair one.

Thereupon the pitiless Edith repeated it, and he was obliged to speak.

"Well, if you insist upon my telling you," he said, "I have. Only once, though."

"Dear me! only once? And that was long ago?"

"Oh, come, Miss Winnington, I don't think we need go into dates! If you'll take me, such as I am, you shall ask me what you please after-

wards, and I'll promise to answer you truthfully. Only, don't you think it is much better to let bygones be bygones?"

"Oh! if you are sure that they are bygones—— But, Mr. Stanniforth, I must ask you just one more question: what makes you ask me to marry you at all?"

"My dear Miss Winnington, what reason could I have but one?"

"Do you mean me to understand, then, that you are in love with me?"

The timid Edith's composure of tone was not a little disconcerting to Mr. Stanniforth, who now behaved in a manner inconsistent with his whole past history by taking refuge in prevarication. "Should I have been here if it were not so?" he asked reproachfully.

"And you are certain that you are not in love with anybody else?"

"Anybody else? I don't quite understand. Why, it stands to reason, you know—how could I be?"

"Oh, Mr. Stanniforth, what a poor actor you are! Do you remember how badly you did your part in those theatricals at Longbourne? I can't pretend to be a very good actress myself; if I had been, I should have accepted you first, and told you something afterwards which would have made you wish you were dead."

"My dear Miss Winnington!"

"I really should—unprincipled as it might have been. But now, if I do you a good turn by refusing you, will you do something for me?"

Tom rubbed his head doubtfully, for he not unnaturally conjectured that Edith contemplated eloping with a detrimental, and was going to ask for his assistance in the matter.

"I hope you won't think me over cautious," he answered, "if I say that I hate making promises in the dark. I should be only too glad to be of use to you in any way, Miss Winnington; but I'm afraid I couldn't help you to do anything that—that might seem to me likely to bring you unhappiness."

"Don't be alarmed," said Edith; "it is nothing very out-of-the-way that I want you to do for me. It is only"—and here she also began to show signals of distress—"it is only to behave as if—that is, not to mention to my mother that I have refused you, for a few weeks—just till the end of the season."

"Oh, I'll promise that!" answered Tom cheerfully, understanding well enough the reason of the request; "and I only hope that, before the end of the season, some more worthy man may stand where I hoped to have stood. I won't say anything about my own disappointment."

"No; I don't think I would, if I were you," said Edith drily. "And now let me tell you that it is all over between Philip and Nellie. I heard it from Philip himself last night; his own words were that she had told him she had never cared a farthing for him. And I can't help thinking it might be worth your while to try again with the lady to whom you proposed at an unknown date."

CHAPTER XXXI.

TOM STANNIFORTH GIVES SOME TROUBLE.

MORE soothing than paregoric, more invigorating than all the waters of Vichy, Homburg, and Kissingen, were the deep tones of a man's voice, ascending from below, to Mrs. Winnington, as she lay outstretched upon the sofa to which her old enemy had pinned her down. For no less than an hour and a half had Mr. Stanniforth been in the drawing-room with Edith, and still he was talking on, as if he never meant to go away. In a certain sense he never would go away; Mrs. Winnington was quite sure of that. She knew very well that there is but one errand which can excuse a man for presenting himself directly after breakfast and staying until the luncheon hour is at hand; and although for some time past she had been in little doubt as to Mr. Stanniforth's intentions, she was too well acquainted with the slippery ways of men to be thoroughly comfortable so long as the fatal words remained still unspoken. Certain it was that they had been spoken now; and Mrs. Winnington, despite the horrible throbbing of her foot, smiled with the seraphic smile of a martyr at the stake.

The long struggle was over, then! There need be no more scheming and plotting, no more grateful accepting of invitations ungraciously given, no more flattering of dull-witted men, no more ignoring of the sneers of insolent women; no more painful eating of dirt, in short. Henceforth there would be a quiet sunset time of peace, in which the weary combatant might lay down her arms—not unthankfully after so many and great labours; a time which might be devoted a little more to thoughts of that long rest which could not now be very many years distant, and which hitherto there had not been much leisure to contemplate, except during a portion of Sunday morning.

It was thus that Mrs. Winnington sang her *Nunc Dimittis*, little guessing of the infamous projects which were being concocted beneath her feet. The worst part of her attack was over, as she knew; the enemy was retreating after his usual fashion, with an occasional savage onslaught to show that he had not yet quitted the field; and at such times Mrs. Winnington always felt in a low and chastened frame of mind. She was a woman of no small courage and endurance, caring little for pain, and fighting it, as she always fought, with a stubborn determination not to give in; but when the pain began to go, her spirits also began to droop; and just now she felt very old and tired and inclined for rest. Had she been in her usual health, she would probably have at once set to work to torment herself with doubts as to whether she might not have made a more brilliant capture than that of Tom Stanniforth, but now she was disposed to give thanks for what she had got. Tom Stanniforth was not only a very rich man already, but would on his father's death become one of the richest commoners in England;

and nowadays wealth was a more important thing than title. Besides, there was no reason why the one should not lead to the other. It was a pity, in some ways, that he should be a Radical; but if the Radicals were to govern the country for the next twenty years, as everybody said they were sure to do, they would want to be better represented in the Upper House than they were at present; and so opportunity might come to the wealthy and deserving. And when Mrs. Winnington reflected that it was within the range of possibility that these Democrats might solve the question by sweeping away the hereditary branch of the Legislature altogether, she breathed an ardent prayer for the preservation of that bulwark of the Constitution.

One can't think of everything; otherwise Edith might have remembered that her prolonged interview with Mr. Stanniforth could not fail to be commented upon, and to be productive of some embarrassment to her in the near future. This detail had escaped her while she indulged in pardonable exultation over her own adroitness and her acquisition of a staunch and devoted friend. That Tom Stanniforth meant to prove himself such a friend he assured her again and again. Nothing could exceed his gratitude, unless it were his profound admiration of the insight which had enabled her to discover what he did not really know himself. He had quite given up thinking about Nellie for a long time, he declared. Well, he had given up thinking of her in that way, at all events; and as for hope, he had abandoned all shadow of that from the very first. Even now he could hardly believe—and so forth, and so forth. It is not necessary to give a full report of all the puerilities uttered on this occasion by one who, through a long career of public usefulness, has ever been held to possess a stock of common sense above the average. Did Miss Winnington really think there could be a chance for him? he asked (for about the twentieth time). Would it be a good plan, now, if he were just to run down to Longbourne from Saturday to Monday, and see how the land lay?

Miss Winnington did not think that would be a good plan at all. "I know exactly what you would do," she said. "If you saw her, you would march straight up to her and repeat your offer in a money-or-your-life sort of tone, just like—like so many other matter-of-fact people. And then, of course, she would refuse you again. Nellie is a great deal too proud to throw over one man and accept another almost in the same breath."

"Yes; there's that, certainly. I didn't think of that."

"And, besides, aren't you rather forgetting your promise to me?"

"Dear me! yes, to be sure! I do wish, Miss Winnington, that there was somebody whom *you* wanted to marry, and that there was a difficulty about it, so that I might be of some assistance to you."

"You are very kind," said Edith, laughing; "but my ambition, you see, is to remain single, and there is a difficulty about that which you can assist me to overcome."

"Just so. Well, you may rely upon me to do my best. Only, you know, that kind of deception can't be kept up very long."

"Sufficient unto the season is the evil thereof," said Edith. And then she began talking about Nellie again, until three loud raps overhead caused her to start and turn pale.

"Oh, do look at the clock!" she exclaimed in dismay. "I must go up to my mother at once." And she hurried her visitor away.

There was no more humane man in England than the member for Blackport; but, as he walked down the street, he could not help thinking to himself that it would be a blessed thing if the gout were to remove Mrs. Winnington to another sphere of activity.

No such summary interposition on the part of Providence took place; and when Mr. Stanniforth called in Park Street two days later, in order to consult Edith upon a certain subject, he not only found her, but also her mother, in the drawing-room. It is to be supposed that Edith had contrived, by some stratagems, to evade the anxious lady's queries and to still her misgivings; for Mrs. Winnington held out her hand with the sweetest of smiles, saying:

"You will excuse my not getting up to receive you. I am still a cripple, you see."

"But no longer a prisoner," observed Tom. "Oh! you're round the corner now; you'll soon be all right again," he added, encouragingly.

"It is only a question of time," replied Mrs. Winnington, who had not shaken off the depression of convalescence. "A few more attacks like this, and there will be an end of me—and it will be just as well so. We all of us have a mission to accomplish, Mr. Stanniforth, and, when once it is accomplished, the sooner we get out of other people's way the better. I wish I could feel that I had accomplished mine!"

Not being quite sure of the nature of the mission referred to, and fearing that the subject, if pursued, might develop itself into a perilous one, Tom made haste to change it.

"Do you know," he asked, "that Longbourne is to be let?"

Mrs. Winnington clasped her hands, let them fall upon her knees, closed her eyes, and nodded a great many times, as signifying that she could say a good deal, but, for charitable reasons, abstained from doing so.

"I never was so astonished in my life," Tom went on. "I was walking down Oxford Street yesterday afternoon, when I happened to glance into a house-agent's window; and there, as large as life, was a photograph of Longbourne. It is to be let for a year or more, they told me. What is the reason of it?"

"Ah!" answered Mrs. Winnington, after more dumb show, "you may well ask the reason of it. I don't know. Poor dear Margaret! she really is so very extraordinary. I have had a letter from her, giving a sort of explanation of the step which she has seen fit to take. I cannot say that it is a satisfactory explanation to my mind, but of course she is mistress of her own actions."

"She is not—not going to be married, is she?" asked Tom hesitatingly.

"Oh, no! it is not so bad—not so serious, I mean—as that. But it seems that Mr. Langley—a most excellent man, but rather too extreme in his views—has been putting notions into her head; and now she wants to go into a sort of retreat for several months. She is rather mysterious about it, but I imagine that she is thinking of entering some sisterhood for a time; she always had a leaning towards that kind of life. She gives me no address, and her letters are to be sent to Longbourne Rectory. Why she should have thought it necessary to let her house I cannot understand."

"But can't you induce her to reconsider her decision?" asked Tom, to whom this explanation seemed even less satisfactory than it had done to Mrs. Winnington. "People really ought not to be allowed to disappear in that way; one can't tell what may happen to them. There must be something under all this that you don't know of."

Mrs. Winnington shrugged her shoulders and spread out her hands. "I have protested," said she; "I can't do more. Speaking quite frankly, as between relatives, I must say that I think a little more consideration might have been shown for me. As you know, I have made my home with Margaret for many years, not wishing that she should be left quite alone; and the result of her acting in this precipitate manner is that in a very short time I shall find myself without a home to go to. Fortunately, it so happens that my health will oblige me to spend the summer in Germany and Switzerland; but after that I really don't know what is to become of us. It is not so easy to find a house and furnish it in such a hurry, and I do think dear Margaret might have considered that."

"But what does she propose doing herself? She doesn't intend to remain in retreat all that time, I presume?"

"No; she speaks of joining me in the course of the summer or autumn, and of our spending the winter together somewhere abroad; but it never seems to occur to dear Margaret that I may have plans and engagements of my own. By the bye, what do *you* think of doing this year?"

"I? Oh, I haven't formed any plan as yet!" answered Mr. Stanniforth, looking a little guilty; for the truth was that he had a plan in his head, and had called in Park Street for the express purpose of taking Edith's opinion with reference to it. "I haven't decided upon anything definitely, at least," he added, by way of quieting his conscience. And then, turning to Edith, "Shall you be at the Botanical *Fête* this afternoon, Miss Winnington?" he asked.

"Kate offered to take me," answered Edith; "but I am not sure that I shall go. It is so hot."

This was not very honest on the part of Edith, who had private reasons for fully intending to be present at the show in question; but when one

has more than one intrigue in hand, the threads are apt to become inconveniently mixed, and it did not suit her purpose that Mr. Stanniforth should be there too.

"You must certainly go, Edith," said her mother with decision. "It is not at all too hot, and I shall trust to Mr. Stanniforth to find you a seat in the shade. I suppose you are going, Mr. Stanniforth?"

Tom looked at Edith, who made a face at him, which he did not understand. He wanted to have a little conversation with her, and this opportunity seemed as good a one as another.

"I'll go, if you'll go," said he, flattering himself that he was playing his part very cleverly.

Edith could only answer, "Oh, very well!" but she did manage, while shaking hands with her visitor, to whisper, "How *stupid* you are!" which sent him away much disconcerted.

It was Lady Travers who had written a line to Walter, telling him to be at the Botanical Gardens that afternoon, and who had afterwards mentioned to Edith what she had done. The latter had received this intelligence with a proper amount of outward indifference, but with inward satisfaction; for she foresaw the approaching day when Mrs. Winnington would once more have the full use of her lower limbs; and when that day came, there would be a difficulty in arranging meetings with Walter, if, indeed, such meetings did not have to cease altogether. It was, therefore, excessively tiresome that Mr. Stanniforth should have declared his intention of joining himself on to the party; but Edith consoled herself with the hope that Walter might not be able to get away from the City until late in the afternoon, before which time she thought she could contrive to give her other friend a hint to take himself off.

Fortune, apparently, was on her side; for when she and her sister drove up to the entrance of the gardens no Walter was in sight. Mr. Stanniforth, however, was waiting patiently for them in a beautifully-fitting suit of clothes, with a glossy hat, and a flower in his buttonhole. Has anybody noticed the characteristic circumstance that a good Conservative takes instinctively to the wearing of old coats after a certain time of life, whereas your Radical is always a smartly-dressed man? Tom, brilliant and beaming, advanced to meet the ladies; and presently, Lady Travers having stopped to speak to an acquaintance, he led Edith out of the crowd to a comparatively sequestered spot, behind a clump of rhododendrons, where two chairs had been left, as if on purpose for them.

"I am afraid," he began at once, "that I made some mistake this morning. Why did you call me stupid?"

"Why did you insist on dragging me here on such a broiling afternoon?" returned Edith. "You are not at all quick in seeing what people want, do you know."

"You didn't give me a chance of seeing until it was too late; and really I don't call it hot at all. But, to be perfectly honest, I believe I

was thinking rather of what I wanted myself than of what you wanted. Since yesterday I have been turning over in my mind a project which has occurred to me, but I would not take any steps before consulting you ; and that was really why I hoped I might see you this afternoon. I humbly apologise for my selfishness."

"It is of no consequence," answered Edith. "What is your project?"

"It is about Longbourne. How would it be if I were to take the place, and spend the summer there? In that way, you see, I should be living near her, and I might do things by degrees, as you suggested. On thinking it over, I quite agree with you that hurry would be fatal. It strikes me also that the arrangement might be a convenient one in some ways for Margaret."

Edith laughed. "I think everybody would know pretty well what brought you," she said. "Bachelors don't usually take large country-houses for the summer."

"But I'm not exactly like the general run of bachelors. I have a large country-house of my own in Staffordshire."

"Which you never inhabit. That seems rather an odd reason for taking another one."

"Oh! well, it is impossible to round things off with such absolute neatness; one can't create exactly the situation that one requires. Even supposing that she did guess why I was at Longbourne, it wouldn't so much matter. I should be very humble and meek, and never go over to Broom Leas unless I were asked. I really think the thing might be worked so as to give it an air of probability. Margaret wants to go abroad, but doesn't care to leave her house in the hands of a stranger; I agree to look after the place in her absence; nobody need know even that I pay rent for it—don't you see? Why shouldn't I wish to have a house in the country as much as anybody else? Perhaps the air of Staffordshire doesn't agree with me. And of course I shall have people down to stay. I had a hope that I might induce you and your mother to honour me so far."

"Oh, that would never do!" exclaimed Edith hastily. But after a minute she began to think that it might do rather well. "I wish we could," she said wistfully; "but unfortunately we shall be at those horrid German baths all the summer."

"Then why not come in September or October? Mrs. Winnington said she would be puzzled to know what to do with herself at that time."

"It certainly would not be pleasant in London just then. I suppose the whole world turns out of London during those two months, doesn't it? Everybody has a holiday—members of parliament, and merchants, and bankers, and shopkeepers, and all."

"I don't know about everybody," answered Tom, laughing; "the bankers and merchants give themselves a holiday, no doubt."

"And then do they shut up their banks and places?"

"Not as a rule; but the banks and places get on very well without them."

"The poor clerks stay and do the work, I suppose. How hard that seems!"

"Oh! they all get their month at one time or another, I take it. But about my plan: you think I may venture to write to Margaret, then? And you'll try and persuade your mother to pay me a visit in the autumn?"

Edith, who was wondering, at that moment, whether Mr. Boulger's slaves were allowed to choose their own time for absenting themselves, answered somewhat irrelevantly, "The question is whether September would be the month."

"Oh! September, or October, or November, any time that suited you best. The only thing is, Miss Winnington," continued Tom, with a graver face and some hesitation of speech, "that by that time I am afraid—or perhaps I ought rather to say that I hope—and yet I have no business to hope. What I mean is that I don't see how it would be possible to keep your mother in the dark so long as to—to—" Tom left his sentence unfinished, for, although he quite understood the part that Edith wished him to play, it was a little awkward to allude to it in plain language.

"Our agreement was only to hold good up to the end of the season, you know," she answered, with a faint smile. "I can't look beyond the end of the season. I hate looking forward at all, it always makes me so miserable," she added; and Tom, glancing up suddenly, saw that her blue eyes were swimming in tears.

This spectacle distressed him beyond measure. "Upon my soul, it's too bad!" he exclaimed involuntarily; and then, "Miss Winnington, I do wish I could help you in any way."

"You can't help me, Mr. Stanniforth; nobody can help me," answered the girl despairingly; and the tears overflowed from her eyelids and ran down her cheeks.

"Now, now, you mustn't—you really mustn't give way!" cried Tom, in great perturbation. "Keep a good heart, my dear Miss Winnington, and it will all come right in the end. I think I can partly understand what your trouble is; but nobody can force you to do what you don't want to do, if you will only stand at bay and defy them. And—and it can't last for ever, you know," added Tom, forgetting, in his desire to console the afflicted one, that he was cheering her with the prospect of her mother's ultimate demise.

Had he been a little better versed in the ways of women, he would have known that he had but to sit still and hold his tongue, and that Edith would presently recover herself; but he was ignorant of this fact in physiology, and so he went on with his well-meant efforts at comfort. "Now, don't cry, pray don't; it really isn't so bad as you think it is!"—

and so forth. Bending forward in the fervour of his entreaties, he grasped Edith's hand, which was lying passively on her lap, and which she did not withdraw.

It was at this most inopportune moment that Walter emerged from the trees, and, halting abruptly on recognising the couple before him, became, as it were, turned to stone.

The effect of this apparition upon Miss Winnington was very incomprehensible to Tom Stanniforth, who had his back turned to the intruder. In the twinkling of an eye she had snatched her hand away; her tears were gone, a cheerful and guileless smile illumined her features, and, except that she was a little red in the face, there was nothing about her to indicate that only a second before she had been a prey to such poignant emotion.

"Oh, here is Mr. Brune!" said she. And she got up, holding out her hand, and saying, "How do you do, Walter?" in the most matter-of-course manner in the world.

Walter, who had no such aptitudes for self-repression, made a grab at his hat, growled out something quite unintelligible, and glared at Mr. Stanniforth as if he meant to devour him, body and bones, forthwith.

"Oho! now I understand!" thought the latter, who, to be sure, could hardly have helped understanding. He was a good deal amused by Walter's angry face, for the fact of a man's being himself in love does not necessarily debar him from enjoying the absurd figure cut by his neighbour in a similar predicament; but he saw that it would not do to let his amusement appear. Evidently nothing beyond the very smallest provocation would be required to bring about an appeal to physical force, and Mr. Stanniforth was not inclined for public brawling.

"Hadn't I better go and tell Lady Travers where you are?" he suggested. "She may be looking for you; and I suppose I may leave you in Brune's charge for the present, may I not?"

He did not wait for an answer, but lifted his hat and walked away, leaving the lovers to fight it out.

"What is the matter?" asked Edith, after waiting in vain for Walter to open fire.

"The matter? with me, do you mean? I don't think I said anything was the matter with me, did I?"

"No; but you look all sorts of dreadful things."

"I am afraid I can't help my looks. I must apologise for having interrupted you, and driven Mr. Stanniforth away. As I am going away myself directly, perhaps I had better look for him, and send him back to you."

Edith raised her eyes for a moment to Walter's face, and then let them drop again, and began drilling holes in the turf with the tip of her parasol. "If you won't ask me anything," she said presently, "of course I can't explain."

"Really," answered Walter, with a short, angry laugh, "I don't think I care particularly about explanations. You don't owe me any; and if you did, it would make very little difference. There are some things which even you would find it rather hard to explain away."

"Even I!" exclaimed Edith, stung by the injustice of the innuendo; "I don't know what you mean by that."

"I only mean that you are rather clever at explanations. I don't much like them myself; I prefer that there should be nothing to explain. But I suppose you would not find that at all amusing."

"You are very rude, and very unfair!" cried Edith. "If this is all I get by—by——"

"By taking some trouble to lead a fool into displaying his folly, you won't do it again? Well, I hope you won't, I'm sure. I can answer for one fool who will decline to play the game any more, at all events."

"You are quite right, Mr. Brune," replied Edith coldly; "you had certainly better give up 'playing the game,' as you call it, since you have no control over your temper."

"I could keep my temper well enough if all this were play to me, as it is to you. But what proves me a fool is that I have been in earnest. It won't happen again though, that's one thing. I don't understand the ways of the world that you live in nowadays, and it is not at all likely that I should ever get accustomed to them. Of course I ought to see that bankers' clerks are only an inferior class of beings, who may think themselves uncommonly lucky if they are flirted with, and that the men to be married are millionnaires, like Stanniforth. But, unfortunately, I don't see it, so I am not fit to play the game, and the sooner I leave the ground the better. Good-bye, Miss Winnington."

Walter bowed with great dignity, and prepared to suit the action to the word. He did not, however, walk away quite so quickly as he might have done, and he must have been listening very attentively to have been arrested by the extremely faint sound which presently reached his ear.

"I beg your pardon," said he, stopping short; "did you call me?"

"No," answered Edith in a chilling tone; and he said, "I beg your pardon" again, and resumed his deliberate retreat.

"Walter!"

There was no doubt about the summons this time; and Walter promptly faced about and obeyed it. "Have you anything to say to me?" he asked.

"I only thought that, after what you said just now, I had better tell you that I am not going to be married to Mr. Stanniforth. Mr. Stanniforth is going to be married—or at least he wishes to be married—to quite another person. It was about her that he had been talking to me when you came up."

"Is this true?" asked Walter hoarsely.

"I am not in the habit of saying what is not true; but you need not believe me, unless you like. If you see Kate as you go out, will you tell her where I am, please? I don't wish to be left quite by myself among all these people."

"Oh, Edith, I beg your pardon! I quite forgot that I was leaving you alone. Will you forgive me, just this once? I am so awfully miserable, and—well, you'll allow that it was enough to make any fellow lose his head. What was I to think when I saw the man holding your hand?"

"I can forgive you," answered Edith, with a sigh; "but I wish you were not so—I hardly know what to say."

"So jealous, I suppose you mean."

"Ah, Walter, you must not talk about being jealous! You know, I told you that I could only meet you as a friend."

"And I told you that I would rather not meet you at all than meet you upon those terms. Lady Travers made me promise a lot of things; but I find I can't keep my promise. I can't look on without hope. To-day I made a mistake; but it would only be the same thing some other day, and then perhaps it wouldn't be a mistake. If you don't marry Stanniforth, you will marry somebody else."

Edith shook her head.

"Then, why am I to be only a friend? Why won't you give me one word of comfort? Why won't you let me have something to live for and work for?"

"You know why. I treated you badly once; but I won't do it again. Sometimes I think I may manage to end my days as an old maid; but that is the utmost that I ever dare to hope for. Will you come and see me sometimes when my hair is grey, and I am living in lodgings with a cat and a canary?"

"I don't know how to talk to you, Edith," said Walter. "You speak as if you wished me to believe that you still cared for me; and yet it seems to me that I should be very foolish if I did believe it. Perhaps I am more dull than the rest of the world; but I do like to have things put plainly and to know where I am."

"You are in the Regent's Park," answered Edith, laughing, "and you are attracting attention by your authoritative manners, and here come Kate and Mr. Stanniforth in search of us. Do, please, try to look like other people for a little while."

"Do you know that it is nearly dinner-time?" said Lady Travers. "Perhaps Mr. Brune would be kind enough to go and find the carriage for us."

And when Walter was gone, she whispered to Edith: "What a goose you are not to marry Mr. Stanniforth! He is worth a dozen of the other."

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